WIVES OF THE PRIME MINISTERS

ELIZABETH LEE

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1844-1906

BY

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E. L.

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INTRODUCTION

FEW, we take it, would deny the influence that women, through the ages, have wielded in political life. Kings and potentates, Ministers of State and priests, have been guided by their counsels. Although such influence was indirect, it was nevertheless powerful, and produced both good and bad results. The published and unpublished diaries and letters of women of high position in the nineteenth century show their deep interest in political matters and their large knowledge of affairs from the inside. That knowledge was, of course, obtained from the communications of the men who were their relatives and friends, but the method of using it was determined by the woman herself. Doubtless the gain and loss of such influence neutralised each other. Whether, when women come to exercise direct influence through the vote, the gain will preponderate, remains to be proved.

Throughout the nineteenth century those women who were the wives of Ministers of State, or in other ways closely connected with them, could be counted on at elections to give as canvassers the most important and valuable assistance, and their help was often instrumental in securing their friends' return. Sometimes they even acted as the party whips. In 1805 Charles James Fox wrote from the House of Commons to the Duchess of Devonshire: "Pray speak to everybody you can to come down or we shall be lost on the Slave Trade. Pray, pray, send anybody you see." Members of Parliament on their way home from the House would call on their lady friends to give the result of the debates and divisions, and if these had already gone upstairs to bed, would send up a written statement by the servant. Lady Holland, as is well known, aspired to exercise great influence on politics. Holland House was the headquarters of the Whig party. During the progress of the Reform Bill, Cabinet Ministers constantly dined with her and openly discussed the political situation during the meal. It is said that in 1828 she asked Lord John Russell to make her

husband Foreign Secretary. "Why, they say, ma'am," replied Lord John, "that you open all Lord Holland's letters, and the foreign Ministers might not like that." Her diary is stuffed full of politics, and it is clear that she was in the confidence of all the men of her party in high office. It may be worth while to record here the impression that the interest in politics of highly placed English ladies made on a German lady of similar position. Gabriele von Bülow, the daughter of Wilhelm von Humboldt and the wife of the German ambassador to England, wrote to her sister in 1833: "The other day I was nearly frantic when the Marchioness of Salisbury said she did not in the least care whether the sun was shining or not; it was of far greater importance whether the Parliamentary sun was shining on the Whigs or the Tories!"

Every one cannot be a Lady Holland, but it is not only the women who are most in the public eye who exercise influence on affairs and on the actions of public men. Sometimes where it may seem, to an outside observer, that a woman is overshadowed by her husband, she may, as a matter of fact, have helped more to

his success than the world will ever know. Nor is it necessarily the women of the highest intellectual endowments who possess the finest judgment and the best insight into the rightness and wrongness of actions. When a woman possesses such gifts by nature, they form an invaluable aid to all who in her circle seek her counsel.

The Prime Ministers of England in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have, with the exception of Lord Melbourne,—and his wife died before he became Prime Minister,—been fortunate in their wives. They married women who, often beautiful, and always intelligent, devoted themselves to furthering both the political interests and the domestic happiness of their husbands. Their influence on public affairs varied in degree and kind, for their rôle was passive rather than active, and personality was their main asset. Now personality is an elusive thing and can never be absolutely reconstructed. Living witnesses can help us somewhat to form a mental picture that now and then gets near the truth; but to paint a portrait without the aid of such evidence, and without that of the written word in the

form of diaries or letters, is no easy task. In the case of the wife of a great man it is rendered yet more difficult by the fact that in the care taken to preserve everything relating to his reputation, little survives about the wife whose career is naturally merged in that of her husband.

Most of the husbands of the women whose lives are sketched in this volume were men who would have been socially important if they had never entered politics or become Ministers of State. Some of them were peers of the realm, and members of great families like the Russells, Stanleys, Gordons, and Cecils. With the exception of Disraeli, they all had their roots deep in English soil. They were men of culture for the most part, and often had literary and artistic ability and tastes. Politics and Society were closely bound together in the nineteenth century, especially during the earlier part of it; it was not only at the dinner-tables and in the drawing-rooms of Ministers that political topics held the lion's share in the conversation. Public life was less of a trade or profession than it has since become, and the interest of the general family circle in the fate of a Bill, or in the doings

of the House, was strong and intense. Disraeli's novels afford an admirable picture of the social side of the political life of his time.

As the memoir of Mrs. Gladstone in this volume amply proves, a wife's influence can keep her husband in power when he himself would be glad to relinquish it; and it has been said over and over again, by those in a position to judge, that had Lady Rosebery lived, Lord Rosebery's political career would have been very different. In every case in which we have the published letters of the husbands to the wives here commemorated, and wherever also we have been privileged to see unpublished letters of the kind, we realise how the wife was the confidante of all details concerning the high matters of State in which the husband was interested. The memoir of Lady Palmerston well brings out the important use a clever woman could make of such information, and it is quite certain that outside the Cabinet and the great Government Departments no one knew more about what was going on in the world than the wives of the Prime Ministers. A looker-on can see more of the game than one actively engaged in it, and

a statesman's wife in the Victorian age was sufficiently removed from the excitement of the arena to be able to bring calm and reasoned judgment to bear on the issues involved.

The wives of Lord Melbourne,[1] Lord Aberdeen,[2] and Lord Rosebery[3] died before their husbands actually attained the Premiership; therefore they can scarcely be logically called wives of Prime Ministers. But it has been thought well to include a memoir of Lady Caroline Lamb, because the facts of her picturesque and agitated career are not accessible in any one complete account, and because it throws a good deal of light on the social and domestic aspects of political life in the early nineteenth century.

With regard to Lord Aberdeen, it is abundantly clear that his first marriage had a lasting effect on his heart and mind. He fell passionately in love when only twenty-one years of age with Lady Catherine Hamilton, eldest

[1] Lady Caroline Lamb died in 1828, and Lord Melbourne became Prime Minister in 1835.

[2] The second Lady Aberdeen died in 1833, and Lord Aberdeen became Prime Minister in 1852.

[3] Lady Rosebery died in 1890, and Lord Rosebery became Prime Minister in 1894.

daughter of the first Marquis of Abercorn. She was a beautiful girl, and worshipped him as much as he worshipped her. They were married on 28th July 1805. Their domestic life was so happy that Lord Aberdeen cared little for public affairs. He considered his wife to be "the most perfect creature ever formed by the power and wisdom of God." Three daughters were born in 1807, 1808, and 1809. A son, born in 1810, died soon after his birth. From that time Lady Aberdeen's health, never robust, drooped, and she died on 29th February 1812. Her husband, who survived her for nearly fifty years, married secondly, in 1815, Harriet Douglas, the widow of Viscount Hamilton. Lord Abercorn seeing his granddaughters on the one hand, the children of his daughter, deprived of their mother, and on the other his grandsons, the children of his son, deprived of their father, thought it would be an admirable arrangement to marry the widower to the widow. Although Lord Aberdeen never forgot his first wife, he had a strong affection for his second, and his letters to her are full of loving tenderness. Unhappily his daughters all died young, and

Lady Aberdeen herself on 26th August 1833. Lord Aberdeen's political career can scarcely be said to have begun in real earnest until 1834, but the gentle melancholy that was so marked a characteristic of his temperament may well be traced to his early experiences of love and marriage.

Lord Rosebery married in 1878 Hannah de Rothschild, only child of Baron Meyer de Rothschild and his wife Juliana Cohen. She was an accomplished woman, loving art and music. She assisted her father in collecting objects of art for Mentmore, the house he began to build in 1857, and there she had unique opportunities for intercourse with the best minds in English and continental society. She learned to judge things in the large spirit usually associated with the masculine mind alone. She had always taken a great interest in politics, and at once set herself to assist and second her husband in his political interests. She instituted at Lansdowne House a salon for the Liberal party, which became the focus of social liberalism and an important element in the organisation of the party. Lansdowne House

was also a general centre of hospitality, for Lady Rosebery believed in bringing together in social intercourse men of widely divergent views, so that the edges of their differences, so to speak, might gradually be rubbed smooth.

Her activities were not solely political. She was keen for the improvement of female industrial conditions, and took part in various public philanthropic enterprises to that end. Her private charities were at once generous and discriminating.

Lady Rosebery died of typhoid fever at Dalmeny Park, 19th November 1890.

It has not been possible to include any memoir of Lady Derby, wife of the "Rupert of debate." Information, without which any sketch must perforce be inadequate, has not been obtainable from the only source whence it could be drawn. Lady Derby was the second daughter of the first Lord Skelmersdale, and was married on 31st May 1825. It was a romantic attachment on the part of young Stanley, who was only twenty-four years of age. His father did not approve, and sent him away for a year, hoping that absence might cure him

of his affection, but on his return the young man went first to Miss Wilbraham, who was a girl of twenty, obtained her consent to be his wife, and then reported himself to his family. Lady Derby died on 26th April 1876; her husband pre-deceased her in 1869.

Sainte-Beuve has said that a woman "quand elle est restée femme par les qualités essentielles," is, even after she is dead, "un peu notre contemporaine toujours." This statement seems especially to apply to the women whose lives I have here attempted to sketch, and I venture to think that their share in shaping the history of their country, through the great men whose companions they were, claims from the present generation a grateful recognition of their qualities of head and heart. Women are expecting in the future to play a much more prominent and important part in public life. Therefore it is perhaps a fitting moment to put on record how their sisters of an earlier epoch performed their allotted part on life's stage.

E. L.

LADY CAROLINE LAMB IN HER PAGE'S DRESS

From a miniature in the possession of Mr. John Murray

WIVES OF THE PRIME MINISTERS

I

LADY CAROLINE LAMB[1]

"A creature of caprice and impulse and whim, her manner, her talk, her character shifted their colours as rapidly as those of a chameleon."

LADY CAROLINE PONSONBY, daughter of the third Lord Bessborough, was born on 13th November 1785. When she was three years old, her mother, a daughter of the first Earl Spencer and sister of the famous Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, fell ill and was ordered to Italy. She took the little girl with her, but being obliged to return to England herself, as her condition became worse, she left the child in Italy for some years, chiefly in charge of a servant. Caroline was then sent to her aunt, the Duchess of Devonshire, to be brought up with her

[1] Her husband was William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne. He was Prime Minister in 1834 and 1836–41.

cousins at Devonshire House. The life of the children there was a curious one. Their meals were served on silver plate, but if they wanted more than was sent up, they had to carry their plates down to the kitchen, where the servants were too busy quarrelling to attend to them. They were quite extraordinarily ignorant. They thought that all people were dukes or beggars, that bread and butter grew ready-made, so to speak, and that horses were fed on beef. Even when Lady Caroline grew up and was married, she was singularly ignorant of the habits of people not of her own class, although she associated with men and women of genius whose incomes were small and who lived in a simple fashion. The first time she called on Lady Morgan in London—Lady Morgan was Sydney Owenson, the novelist, and wife of Sir Charles Morgan, a physician—she was announced by a footman in livery. As she was leaving, Lady Caroline said :

" My dear Creature, have you really not a groom of the chambers with you ? nothing but your footman ? You must let me send you something, you must indeed. You will never get on here, you know, with only one servant—you must let me send you one of my pages.

I am going to Brocket, to watch the sweet trees that are coming out so beautifully, and you shall have a page while I am away." Later, as will be seen, notwithstanding Lady Morgan's modest household, the two ladies became fast friends.

When Caroline was ten years old she was transferred to the care of her grandmother, Lady Spencer, whose household consisted of seventy servants, and who herself had always lived among clever people and possessed brilliant conversational powers.—Her marriage was unconventional and romantic. Mr. Spencer had, as a minor, become attached to her; and with her father, Stephen Poyntz, a well-known diplomatist, and her mother and sister, she was invited to Althorp to celebrate the coming of age of the heir, where a large party of about fifty persons was assembled. Young Spencer informed Mr. Poyntz that now he was his own master he intended to marry his daughter the very next day. Only Lord and Lady Cowper were told besides Mr. and Mrs. Poyntz, and they and the bride and bridegroom stole away during the dancing that was going on to Lady Cowper's dressing-room, and the young couple were there duly married. They then rejoined the dancers; and it is further related that after

supper everybody retired as usual to their different apartments, and that Louisa Poyntz, who had shared her sister's room, gave up her place on this occasion.

Caroline thus had no systematic education, but she possessed natural gifts of a high order. She became a good linguist, knowing well French, Italian, Greek, and Latin. She loved music and painting, devoting many hours all through her life to water-colours, and had a great talent for caricature. She was original in her conversation, in her dress, indeed in everything. At one period of her childhood her grandmother became alarmed at her originality, which bordered on eccentricity, and consulted a doctor as to the state of her mind. He decreed that her brain ought not to be overtaxed with lessons, and that she should not be too strictly disciplined. Consequently she really ran wild. Until she reached her teens she could neither write nor spell, but nevertheless she composed verses. She declared later, speaking of her childish days, "I preferred washing a dog, or polishing a piece of Derbyshire spar, or breaking in a horse"—she was a fearless rider and could ride bareback—"to any accomplishment in the world."

When she was thirteen, William Lamb, who was then twenty, saw her at Brocket Hall, where she had accompanied her cousins on a visit to his mother, Lady Melbourne, and was greatly attracted to her. She had already heard of him as a "friend of liberty," and was quite ready to admire him. Later on he used to see her at Lord Bessborough's villa at Roehampton, and became more and more fascinated by her, and she was equally delighted with him. But he was a second son, and his prospects at the Bar did not seem brilliant, and so neither family took any notice of the young couple. Lady Caroline at nineteen was slight and graceful, not tall, with small regular features, dark hazel eyes, and golden hair. She was not a beauty, but possessed the charm that is even more alluring. She was full of ideas and endowed with the power of expressing them gracefully; she had, moreover, a low, musical voice. Her friends gave her a variety of nicknames—such as sprite, Ariel, squirrel, bat, young savage—and they show the general impression she made on them. Her strong imagination coloured everything, and it is doubtful if at any time of her life she saw things as they really were. A girl so accomplished and

attractive and with such distinguished connections seemed far removed from William Lamb, a younger son with his way to make in the world. But in 1805 his elder brother died, and he became the heir, and then he felt justified in offering himself to Lady Caroline.

At first she refused him, assuring him that her violent temper would make for unhappiness in married life, but suggested that she should adopt boy's clothes and act as his secretary. That arrangement did not commend itself to him, and so he waited in patience, and after a short space, proposed again and was accepted. The marriage excited great interest among Lady Caroline's friends and relations. They found her looking prettier than ever, and though sometimes nervous, she appeared to be very happy, and William Lamb quite devoted to her. The wedding took place between seven and eight on the evening of 3rd June 1805. Lady Elizabeth Foster, who was present, wrote to her son that Lady Caroline "was dreadfully nervous, but his (*i.e.* Lamb's) manner to her was beautiful, so tender and considerate." A passionate scene, however, occurred when the time came for the bride and bridegroom to go away, Lady Caroline never

having contemplated that marriage meant leaving her parents and her girlhood's home.

The first year of married life was spent chiefly in London, where the young couple had a suite of apartments in Lady Melbourne's house in Whitehall; there were visits to Brocket Hall (where the honeymoon had been passed) and to Panshanger, William Lamb's sister Emily having married Lord Cowper in July 1805.[1]

In January 1806 Lamb entered Parliament as Whig member for Leominster. Lady Caroline led a gay, irresponsible life. She lacked concentration, and her versatile talents caused her to occupy herself with too many things. A little painting, a little music, a little reading, some writing of verses, playgoing, acting in private theatricals, with a large amount of riding and dancing, filled the days and nights. Her friends still found her "the same wild, delicate, odd, delightful person, unlike everything," as she had been before her marriage.

Life at Melbourne House was certainly gay. Waltzes and quadrilles, then new dances, were daily practised there, among the learners being Lady Jersey, Lady Cowper, the Duke of Devonshire, Miss Milbanke, who was later to become

[1] See p. 101.

the wife of Byron, and a number of foreign notabilities whose diplomatic appointments made it necessary for them to live in London. Forty or fifty young people, all gay and noisy, would dance from noon until dinner-time, and afterwards there would be suppers and balls and routs to attend. Lady Caroline would give "immense assemblies" at Melbourne House in the evening, the guests often having to walk to their carriages, and some not getting away till 3 a.m. A few choice spirits would be invited to supper in Lady Melbourne's apartments below, and would stay till 6 a.m. Among them were the Prince of Wales and Sheridan; the latter got completely drunk. In 1807 in the midst of all this life of excitement, a son was born to Lady Caroline, and it was hoped that motherhood would tend to sober her and help her to lead a quieter life. But unhappily the child, though healthy in body, was feeble in mind. He was not actually imbecile, but never developed mentally. He outlived his mother, but died before his father[1] on 27th November 1836.

In the autumn of 1811 Byron returned from his travels with the first two cantos of "Childe

[1] Lord Melbourne died 24th November 1848.

Harold" in his pocket. Some early proofs were given to private friends, among them to Rogers, who lent them to Lady Caroline. She was enchanted, and determined to get to know the poet about whom every one was talking, and about whom she talked freely with extravagant praise. But nothing did Lady Caroline do in an ordinary way. At a party at Lady Westmoreland's, the hostess brought up Byron to introduce him to Lady Caroline. She, though dying to know him, looked earnestly at him and turned away, and recorded in her journal that he was "mad, bad, and dangerous to know." A day or two later she was calling on Lady Holland when Byron was announced. Lady Holland said, "I must present Lord Byron to you." He reminded her of her refusal to be introduced to him, and asked the reason, and begged permission to go to see her. Next day he called at Melbourne House. Rogers and Moore were there. Lady Caroline had just come in from riding and was, in her own words, "filthy and heated." She flew out of the room to wash herself. When she returned, Rogers said, "Lord Byron, you are a happy man; Lady Caroline has been sitting in all her dirt with us, but when you were announced she flew to beautify

herself." Then Byron asked if he might come and see her when she was alone; she gave permission, and so the acquaintance was begun.

After the publication of "Childe Harold" Byron leapt into fame. He was the one subject of conversation. All the women, as Lady Caroline elegantly phrased it, threw up their heads at him. She herself absolutely besieged him, and wrote him the most imprudent letters. In the first she assured him that if he needed money all her jewels were at his service. When she met him at a party, a frequent occurrence, she insisted on being taken home by him to Melbourne House in his carriage; and if he was at an entertainment to which she was not invited, she would wait for him in the street outside the house until he left. Byron was of course attracted by her, and described her as "the cleverest, most agreeable, absurd, amiable, perplexing, dangerous, fascinating little being that lives now, or ought to have lived two thousand years ago," and was at first flattered by her bold attentions. He became an habitué of her circle, and even stopped the dancing so loved of the young people at Melbourne House, because it was a pastime in which his lameness would not permit him to join. But much as Byron admired

Lady Caroline she never realised that he admired other ladies as well. In May 1812, when the report got about that he was going back to Greece, it was popularly said that husbands were greatly relieved and felt that then they could sleep in peace. There was fear, however, in some minds that Lady Caroline would insist on going with him, "she is so wild and imprudent." Byron seems to have teased and played with her and to have gone as far as she allowed him. They went about together in public, or retired from the crowd to read poetry together. Byron complained that she loved her husband better than she did him, and she was deeply grieved when she was told that Byron thought her heartless. The infatuation lasted about nine months, and then Byron grew tired of her. In the beginning he had certainly been flattered by the attentions of one so highly placed. They both liked to talk about themselves, a circumstance that did not make for peace; Lady Caroline imprudently read him her verses, a fatal error, for though he praised them mildly, he was much more anxious that she should praise his. Her attempts to monopolise him in public bored him and he grew cold. In the early days of

their acquaintance, Byron had made her promise not to waltz; but later on, at a ball given by Lady Heathcote, she said to Lady Caroline, "Come, you must begin." She replied bitterly, "Oh yes, I'm in a merry humour," and whispered to Byron, who was standing by her, "I conclude I may waltz now?" He answered sarcastically, "With everybody in turn—you always did it better than any one. I shall have a pleasure in seeing you." So she danced, and afterwards, feeling ill and fatigued, she entered a small inner room where supper was laid. Byron and some ladies happened to come in after Lady Caroline, and Byron said to her, "I have been admiring your dexterity." Infuriated by his manner, she took up a knife. Byron continued his untimely and unwise jesting, saying, "Do, my dear, but if you mean to act a Roman's part, mind which way you strike with your knife; let it be at your own heart, not at mine, for you have struck there already." She ran away, still clasping the knife, but without the slightest intention of injuring either herself or him. The ladies very naturally screamed and followed her, and in the struggle to get the knife away from her, her hand got cut and the blood went over her gown. Of course the rumour

went about that she had tried to murder Byron and commit suicide.

Her husband does not seem to have attached much importance to his wife's escapades. He knew her craving for excitement, how short a time, as a rule, her fancies lasted, how, as soon as anything ceased to be new and rare, she grew tired of it, and therefore thought her infatuation for Byron would die a natural and speedy death, and that it was better to laugh at it or ignore it than to treat it seriously. And in spite of her strange behaviour she was really fond of her husband, and if he had taken her in hand and brought discipline into her life, it would have been better for her and for him.

Her mother and her mother-in-law grew seriously alarmed, and the former carried her daughter off to Ireland, where they remained for three months. Byron then wrote her the following letter:

"My dearest Caroline,—If tears, which you saw, and know I am not apt to shed; if the agitation in which I parted from you—agitation which, you must have perceived through the whole of this most nervous affair, did not commence till the moment of leaving you approached—if all I have said and done,

and am still but too ready to say and do, have not sufficiently proved what my feelings are, and must ever be, towards you, my love, I have no other proof to offer. God knows I never knew till this moment the madness of my dearest and most beloved friend. I cannot express myself, this is no time for words—but I shall have a pride, a melancholy pleasure, in suffering what you yourself can scarcely conceive, for you do not know me. I am about to go out, with a heavy heart, for my appearing this evening will stop any absurd story which the spite of the day will give rise to. Do you think *now* that I am cold and stern and wilful ? Will ever others think so ? Will your mother ever ? That mother to whom we must indeed sacrifice much more, much more on my part than she shall ever know, or can imagine. ' Promise not to love you ? ' Ah, Caroline, it is past promising ! But I shall attribute all concessions to the proper motive, and never cease to feel all that you have already witnessed, and more than ever can be known, but to my own heart—perhaps, to yours. May God forgive, protect, and bless you ever and ever, more than ever. Your most attached BYRON.

" P.S.—These taunts have driven you to this, my dearest Caroline, and were it not for your mother, and the kindness of your connections,

is there anything in heaven or earth that would have made me so happy as to have made you mine long ago? And not less now than *then*, but more than ever *at this time*. God knows I wish you happy, and when I quit you, or rather you, from a sense of duty to your husband and mother, quit me, you shall acknowledge the truth of what I again promise and vow, that no other, in word or deed, shall ever hold the place in my affections which is and shall be sacred to you till I am nothing. You know I would with pleasure give up all here or beyond the grave for you; and in refraining from this, must my motives be misunderstood? I care not who knows this, what use is made of it—it is to you, and to you only, *yourself*. I was, and am yours, freely and entirely, to obey, to honour, to love, and fly with you, *when*, *where*, *and how* yourself might and may determine."

It is difficult to know what to make of this letter. It shows, however, that the relationship between them had not overstepped the bounds of friendship, and it is probable that Byron, like most men in a similar position, had had enough of platonic affection. But recognising the dangers and inconveniences of going further, and desiring to withdraw without unduly hurting Lady Caroline's feelings, he adopted the

soothing tone suitable to a tiresome child who, in spite of her faults, still held something of his affection. He deplored the difficulty, nay the impossibility, of any solution except that of parting, and yet, as is also the way of men with women in these cases, left the decision on her shoulders. He is hers to obey, honour, love, and fly with as *she herself* may determine. We cannot help suspecting that Byron well knew that Lady Caroline would not run away with him. This is not the attitude of a man sincerely in love, and ready to dare all for love's sake. However, Lady Caroline seems to have been satisfied, and Byron continued to write to her while she was in Ireland "the most tender and most amusing" letters. But Byron was thinking of matrimony, and had fixed his choice on Lady Caroline's cousin, Miss Milbanke, a project furthered by Lady Melbourne; and when he heard that Lady Caroline was returning to England he took the bull by the horns and addressed to her at Dublin the letter that put a real end to his connection with her, a letter in which he told her he was no longer her lover, that he was attached to another, that he was, however, grateful for her favour, and in proof of his regard advised her to correct her vanity,

"which is ridiculous," to exert her absurd caprices on others, and to leave him in peace.[1] This "cruel letter" threw her into such a fever that fears were entertained for her mind, but thanks to the careful nursing of her mother, she recovered and was brought home.

She became more eccentric, unmanageable, and uncertain in temper than ever. One day she actually called on Byron. He was out, but she insisted on being shown to his room. On the table she found Beckford's *Vathek*, and wrote in the first page: "Remember me!" Byron on his return wrote under her words these stanzas:

"Remember thee! remember thee!
Till Lethe quench life's burning stream
Remorse and shame shall cling to thee,
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

Remember thee! Aye, doubt it not.
Thy husband too shall think of thee;
By neither shalt thou be forgot,
Thou *false* to him, thou *friend* to me."

Lady Caroline marked the end of her connection with Byron by burning him in effigy one winter's day at Brocket with elaborate ceremonial, not omitting a poem specially

[1] See p. 40.

written for the occasion, of which these lines will serve to show the quality:

"Ah! look not thus on me, so grave, so sad;
Shake not your heads, nor say the Lady's mad.
Judge not of others, for there is but one
To whom the heart and feelings can be known.
Upon my youthful faults few censures cast;
Look to the future—and forgive the past.
London, farewell, vain world, vain life, adieu!
Take the last tears I e'er shall shed for you.
Young tho' I seem, I leave the world for ever,
Never to enter it again—no, never—never!"

She was in a terrible state of uncertainty as to what she should now do with her life, and in discussing the matter with Lady Morgan makes all sorts of wild suggestions. Should she live a *good* sort of a half kind of life in some cheap street, or above a shop, or give lectures to little children and keep a school and so earn her bread? Or should she write a sort of quiet everyday sort of novel, full of wholesome truths, or attempt to be poetical; or if she failed, beg her friends for a guinea apiece and their name to sell her work "on the best foolscap paper"; or should she fret and die?

But Lady Caroline, with all her cleverness, was no artist in life, and did not realise that true wisdom and happiness resided in making the most of what she possessed, and that the

thing for her to do was to occupy herself with her husband and child.

All sorts of stories about her eccentricities got about. It was said that she beat a maid and turned her out of doors without clothes in the night, and tried to murder her page. The latter report she explains herself:

"One day I was playing ball with him; he threw a squib into the fire. I threw the ball at his head; it hit him on the temple, and he bled. He cried out, 'Oh, my lady, you have killed me!' Out of my senses, I rushed into the hall and screamed, 'O God, I have murdered the page!' The servants and people in the street caught the sound, and it was soon spread about."

William Lamb saw that this sort of thing could not go on, and his family, who realised the harm it was doing to his career, insisted on a separation. While the instruments were being drawn up, Lady Caroline wrote her novel *Glenarvon*. Here is her own account of the proceeding:

"In one month I wrote and sent *Glenarvon* to the press. It was written at night, without the knowledge of any one but a governess, Miss Walsh. I sent for a copyist, and when he came she pointed to me seated at a table and dressed

in boy's clothes. He would not believe that a schoolboy would write such a thing. In a few days I received him dressed as usual. I told him the author, William Osmond, was dead." She always declared that her husband was delighted with the book. It was not shown to him till it was printed.

However that may have been, the deed of separation was ready for signing. As Lady Caroline put it: "If I will but sign a paper, all my rich relations will protect me, and I shall, no doubt, go with an Almack ticket to heaven." All the parties whose signatures were required were assembled, and Lamb went first to the room where she was, in order to speak to her about their son. The others waited and waited; at length, growing impatient, her brother went to see the cause of the delay. He found her seated beside her husband feeding him with tiny scraps of transparent bread and butter.

And so for a time things remained as they were.

Byron had married in 1815, and the next year was separated from his wife, and left England for ever. To her credit it must be said that Lady Caroline never forgot Byron. With all her caprice, the episode made a lasting impression

on her mind. In November 1816 she wrote to John Murray, evidently considering she had every right to do so, asking him to let her see Byron's new poems before publication. The conclusion of her note proves that her old sprightliness had not abandoned her:

"Believe me, therefore, sincerely thankful for what I am going to receive—as the young lady said to a duchess when she was desired by her parents to say 'Grace.'"

Murray did not answer, so Lady Caroline wrote again, repeating her request with the adjuration:

"Let me entreat you to remember a maxim I have found very useful to me, that there is nothing in this life worth quarrelling about, and that half the people we are offended with never intended to give us cause."

In August 1818 Lady Morgan, calling one day on Lady Caroline at Melbourne House, was received in her bedroom, and found her lying on a couch, wrapped in fine muslins, full of grace and cordiality. In the bow window of the room there stood fastened to the ground the chair in which Byron had sat to Sanders for the picture painted by Lady Caroline's desire.

But Lady Caroline could not live without some sort of interest outside the more or less humdrum events of family and social life, and now set herself to captivate William Godwin. In 1819 her brother-in-law, George Lamb, was contesting Westminster, and she wrote to Godwin to ask him to vote for Lamb. He replied that he did "not mix in the business of the world," and was too old to alter his course "even at the flattering invitation of Lady Caroline Lamb." She conceived a great admiration for Godwin's works, and evidently read them with care and appreciation, and was much disappointed and vexed that the two children and the four young women to whom she endeavoured to read them did not choose to attend. Glad to have some one again to whom she could lay open her mind, for Lady Caroline was ever ready to confide her woes and her thoughts to any one who would listen, she entered into correspondence with Godwin. She further hoped that he, with his wisdom, might be able to advise her how to deal with her son, whose intellect showed no signs of developing. Godwin paid a visit to Brocket, saw the boy, but could suggest no means of improving his mental health. All the same, Lady Caroline in a while took Godwin for her

guide, philosopher, and friend, and wrote him long letters about herself. They belong to the years 1821–23, and the following passages serve to illustrate the curious mixture of sense and sensibility contained in them:

"For what purpose, for whom should I endeavour to grow wise? What is the use of anything? What is the end of life? When we die, what difference is there here between a black beetle and me?"

"BROCKET, 1821.

"You would not say, if you were here now, that nature had not done her best for us. Everything is looking beautiful, everything in bloom. Yet do not fancy that I am here in rude health, walking about, and being notable and bountiful. I am like the wreck of a little boat, for I never come up to the sublime and beautiful—merely a little gay merry boat which perhaps stranded itself at Vauxhall or London Bridge—or wounded without killing itself, as a butterfly does in a tallow candle. There is nothing marked, sentimental, or interesting in my career. All I know is, that I was happy, well, rich, joyful, and surrounded by friends. I have now one faithful kind friend in William Lamb, two others in my father and brother—but health, spirits, and all else is gone—gone how? Oh, assuredly not by

the visitation of God, but slowly and gradually by my own fault!"

"1823 (?).

"My own faults are so great that I can see and remember nothing beside. Yet I am tormented with such a superabundance of activity, and have so little to do, that I want you to tell me how to go on.

"It is all very well if one died at the end of a tragic scene, after playing a desperate part; but if one lives, and instead of growing wiser, one remains the same victim of every folly and passion, without the excuse of youth and inexperience, what then? Pray say a few wise words to me. There is no one more deeply sensible than myself of kindness from persons of high intellect, and at this period of my life I need it.

"I have nothing to do—I mean necessarily. There is no particular reason why I should exist; it conduces to no one's happiness, and, on the contrary, I stand in the way of many. Besides, I seem to have lived five hundred years and feel I am neither wiser, better, nor worse than when I began. My experience gives me no satisfaction; all my opinions, and beliefs, and feelings are shaken, as if suffering from frequent little shocks of earthquakes. I am like a boat in a calm, in an unknown and to me unsought-for

sea, without compass to guide or even a knowledge whither I am destined. Now, this is probably the case of millions, but that does not mend the matter, and whilst a fly exists, it seeks to save itself. Therefore excuse me if I try to do the same."

In these letters we have Lady Caroline almost at her best. In another of them there is pertinent criticism of Godwin's books. She tells him, "There is a brevity which suits my want of attention, a depth of thought which catches at once, and does not puzzle my understanding, a simplicity and kindness which captivates and arouses every good feeling, and a clearness which assists those who are deficient, as I am, in memory." [1]

But unhappily the unstable and eccentric side of Lady Caroline held its own, and overshadowed her more sober and serious moods. The news of Byron's death was brought to her at Brocket and introduced with the remark, "Caroline, behave properly. I know it will shock you. Lord Byron is dead." A fever ensued, and the first day she was well enough to drive out in an open carriage she met a

[1] The correspondence is printed in C. Kegan Paul's *Life of William Godwin.*

funeral procession. Her husband, who was riding on in front, asked whose funeral it was, and was told Byron's. Lamb was much shocked and affected, and naturally forbore to tell his wife. But as she kept on asking where and when Byron was to be buried, she had to be told. A fresh bout of illness was brought on, and she became more unmanageable than ever, more reckless and unaccountable. Once in the country she wished to drive out to call on an acquaintance. There was no one to accompany her, so she insisted on occupying the seat beside the coachman. On arriving at the house, the footman waited to help her down, but she exclaimed, "I am going to jump off and you must catch me." Before the man could prevent the catastrophe, he found her in his arms. She then proceeded to pay her visit in a perfectly calm, decorous, and dignified manner. Another time, when the butler was laying the table for a dinner-party, she chanced to go into the dining-room, and not liking the decorations, leaped into the middle of the table amid all the epergnes and china and glass to demonstrate by her attitude the way in which the centrepiece should be arranged, leaving the servant open mouthed with astonishment. Her husband was equally

subject to the annoyance of her vagaries. After a worse outburst than usual during dinner at Melbourne House, as soon as Lady Caroline had left the room, Lamb ordered the horses and drove off to Brocket. He sat up very late, but soon after he had gone to bed he heard sounds in the corridor. He got up to investigate what they might be, and found his wife lying on the door-mat outside his room, convulsively sobbing.

Meantime Lady Caroline had formed a friendship with Lady Morgan and entered into correspondence with her when either was away from London. The details of the Byron affair are given in these letters, but they are interesting and amusing on other counts. In one Lady Caroline asks that the curious stories that get about as to her actions shall be contradicted, and proceeds to explain them away with great plausibility. In another she refers to a governess whose chief recommendation is that "she is attached to an old mathematician in Russia—a Platonic attachment," and they are not to marry or meet for ten years. "Now," Lady Caroline continues, "as every one must, will, and should fall in love, it is no bad thing that she should have a happy, Platonic, romantic attachment to an old, mad mathematician several

thousand miles off. It will keep her steady." And the young lady was ready for eighty guineas a year to dedicate all her time to the children after ten in the morning to six at night, would also play on the harp of an evening, read to the lady if she were ill, or write her letters for her. Her spelling and grammar seem to have been somewhat wanting, but before the matter was concluded she caught a bad cold, and Lady Caroline fears her would-be mistress will not care to wait till she is recovered. She again repeats that the girl has every good quality under the sun, but "she has a cold and cough, and is in love—I cannot help it; can you?" Another time she confesses to Lady Morgan, "The loss of what one adores affects the mind and heart; but I have resigned myself to it, and God knows I am satisfied with all I have and have had. My husband has been to me as a guardian angel. I love him most dearly."

But by 1825 things had come to such a pass that separation was inevitable. Everything was done to make the conditions as little irksome as possible to Lady Caroline. It was arranged that she should spend most of her time at Brocket with her old father-in-law, Lord Melbourne. She corresponded with her husband

and retained her affection for him, such as it was. Soon after the separation became a fact she sent Lamb these verses :

"Loved one! No tear is in my eye,
Though pangs my bosom thrill,
For I have learned when others sigh
To suffer and be still.

Passion and pride and flatt'ry strove,
They made a wreck of me,
But oh! I never ceased to love,
I never loved but thee.

My heart is with our early dream,
And still thy influence knows,
Still seeks thy shadow on the stream
Of memory as it flows:

Still hangs o'er all the records bright
Of moments brighter still,
Ere love withdrew his starry light,
Ere thou hadst suffered ill.

'Tis vain! 'tis vain! no human will
Can bid that time return;
There's not a light on earth can fill
Again love's darkened urn.

'Tis vain—upon my heart, my brow,
Broods grief no words can tell,
But grief itself more idle now—
Loved one, fare thee well."

But notwithstanding her grief and sorrow, Lady Caroline could not live without admirers, and for a space young Bulwer came under her spell. His first acquaintance with her com-

menced in his childhood. A poor man was injured in a crowd, and with her usual impulsiveness she had him placed in her carriage and took him to his home. Bulwer heard of the incident, and touched by it wrote some childish verses on it, and sent them to Lady Caroline. Brocket, it should be remembered, was not far from Knebworth, where the boy was living with his mother. Lady Caroline, pleased with the verses, asked Mrs. Bulwer to bring the child to see her. Lady Caroline took a fancy to him, and painted his portrait as a child nearly nude, seated on a rock in the midst of the sea, with under it the motto, "Seul sur la terre." Such a visit was made once or twice a year in the time that followed.

But when Bulwer was twenty-one he was destined to come into closer intimacy with Lady Caroline, with whose remarkable powers of conversation he was thoroughly fascinated. She was eighteen years older than he was, but looked much younger, a fact due probably to her slight rounded figure and a childlike mode of wearing her pale golden hair in close curls. Bulwer describes her appearance, and it is interesting to see how she must have retained nearly all the features and qualities she possessed as a girl.

She had large hazel eyes, capable of much varied expression, exceedingly good teeth, a pleasant laugh, and a musical intonation of voice. She had to a surpassing degree the attribute of charm, and never failed to please if she wished to do so. Her talk was, according to Bulwer, wildly original, "combining great and sudden contrasts, from deep pathos to infantine drollery; now sentimental, now shrewd, it sparkled with anecdotes of the great world and of the eminent people among whom she had lived. Ten minutes after, it became gravely eloquent with religious enthusiasm, or shot off into metaphysical speculations—sometimes absurd, sometimes profound — generally suggestive and interesting."

Bulwer delighted to listen to what she could tell him about Byron. Lady Caroline, of course, was pleased to imagine herself in love with Bulwer, and the young man's vanity was hugely flattered. On his return to Cambridge the pair corresponded, and a third person reading the letters might have thought that they were actually lovers, but that was not the case.

Lady Caroline fell ill, and when she was somewhat recovered sent for Bulwer to tell him that she felt she had acted wrongly in loving

him, and was endeavouring to overcome her feeling. He was to be her dearest friend, or like a son might be to her, but in no way her lover. Bulwer, still fascinated, agreed, and went away more in love than ever.

Later on he was invited to Brocket for the purpose of attending a ball at Panshanger. He arrived at three or four in the afternoon and found the house full of company. He did not see Lady Caroline until dinner. To his surprise and chagrin she avoided speaking to him, and did not allow him to drive to the ball in her carriage. She had, in the meantime, found another admirer in the person of Mr. Russell,[1] a natural son of the Duke of Bedford, a very handsome man, very fashionable, in the prime of life. She took no notice of Bulwer until the end of the evening, and by that time he was furiously angry. As they all went up to bed he said to her, "I shall be gone to-morrow before you are up. Good-bye." About nine o'clock the next morning she sent a little note to his room imploring him not to go till he had seen her. He then went to her room, and was received with affection. Lady Caroline wept, entreated forgiveness, and

[1] She told Lady Morgan she loved him chiefly because he stood by her when no one else did.

finally persuaded Bulwer to stay on. He went out riding with her and Mr. Russell, but felt so miserable he soon returned to the house, retired to his room, and gave way to his feelings. In this state she found him, and again tried to pacify him. On rejoining the party downstairs he noticed that Mr. Russell was wearing a ring which Byron had given Lady Caroline, and which she only allowed those she loved to wear. Bulwer had had the privilege of wearing it; Lady Caroline had even wanted him to accept it, but he would not on account of its costliness. Bulwer's resentment increased. The rest must be told in his own words: "After dinner I threw myself upon the sofa. Music was playing. Lady Caroline came to me. 'Are you mad?' said she. I looked up. The tears stood in my eyes. I could not have spoken a word for the world. What do you think she said aloud? 'Don't play this melancholy air. It affects Mr. Bulwer so that he is actually weeping.' My tears, my softness, my *love* were over in a moment. I sprang up, laughed, talked, and was the life of the company. But when we broke up for the evening, I went to her and said: 'Farewell for ever. It is over. Now I see you in your true light. Vain and heartless, you have

only trifled with my feelings in order to betray me. I despise as well as leave you. Instead of jealousy I only feel contempt. Farewell. Go, and be happy.'"

Bulwer records that a fever ensued and that he lost twenty ounces of blood, but that he endeavoured and with success to forget the whole episode, an easy feat since his feeling had chiefly been a mixture of vanity and imagination. He also testified to Lamb's kindness to him. "I think he saw my feelings. He is a singularly fine character for a man of the world."

The episode, however, left a deep impression on Bulwer, for he drew her in several of his early sketches for novels.[1] He also described her in a satirical sketch of Almack's, which expresses Bulwer's belief that her attachments were as innocent as they were fickle :

> "But all thy woes have sprung from feeling;
> Thine only guilt was not concealing;
> And now mine unforgotten friend,
> Though thou art half estranged from me,
> My softened spirit fain would send
> One pure and pitying sigh to thee."

For a time Lady Caroline continued to correspond with him, and her letters give a

[1] Lady Melton in *Dr. Lindsay*; Lady Clara in *Lionel Hastings*; Lady Bellenden in *Greville*.

picture of her life at Brocket. "Happy, healthy, quiet, contented, I get up at half-past four, ride about with Haggard, and see harvest men at work in this pretty, confined green country, read a few old books, see no one, hear from no one, and occasionally play at chess with Dr. Goddard, or listen to the faint high warblings of Miss Richardson. This contrast to my sometime hurried life delights me. Besides, I am well. And that is a real blessing to one's self and one's companions." [1] She also says that she now, in her soothed and chastened spirit, detests wit and humour and satire. Bulwer seems to have made Lady Caroline his confidante in his love affair with Rosina Wheeler, the haughty, brilliant, and beautiful girl whom he married. For a time she sat at Lady Caroline's feet, and in some ways resembled her model in temperament.

Lady Caroline affected or more probably sincerely imagined that she possessed a love of literature, and frequented the literary salons of the day, and was to be seen at Lady Cork's, Lady Charleville's, Miss Spence's, and Miss Lydia White's. Again, any one who had known Byron possessed a passport to her favour. Thus she

[1] 2nd August 1826.

made the acquaintance of Isaac Nathan, the musical composer who had been intimate with Byron, and for whom Byron wrote the "Hebrew Melodies" for Nathan to set to music, and asked him to come and sing to her. "Come," she writes, "and soothe one who ought to be happy but is not." Nathan composed the music to many of her own verses, which he published in 1829 in a curious little volume entitled *Fugitive Pieces.* It contains the lines written by Lady Caroline that form a strange comment on her husband's well-known inveterate and incurable habit of decorating his conversation with oaths:

> "Yes, I adore thee, William Lamb,
> But hate to hear thee say God d——:
> Frenchmen say English cry d—— d——,
> But why swear'st thou? thou art a *Lamb.*"

Hobhouse went to see her at Melbourne House, in 1824, and had a two hours' talk with her, and found her furious at what she considered the misrepresentation of her and of her attachment to Byron in Medwin's *Conversations with Byron.* She wrote Medwin a long letter which, making allowance for her vivid imagination, may be regarded as her *apologia.* She also sent Hobhouse sixteen quarto volumes of journals kept by her since 1806, which he re-

turned, assuring her that no purpose would be served by their publication.

Another literary acquaintance was a man she was pleased to call a rising poet, Wilmington Fleming. His works have not survived, and judging by the verses he wrote describing the eccentric fashion in which Lady Caroline celebrated her wedding-day at Brocket, the world is scarcely the loser. He may have helped Lady Caroline to some extent, probably in the capacity of secretary, with her own literary work. For this assistance she seems to have paid him when she had any money,—she was the most extravagant of women, her father-in-law always called her "Her Lavishship,"—and there is a curious letter in which she tells Fleming, who has evidently asked for payment: "I received no money but just what the servants got for their food. I have been much too ill to write or see you." She evidently tried to help him to get his poems published.

But Lady Caroline's health was shattered, and despite the separation she turned more and more to her husband as her best protector and truest friend. The last years were spent at Brocket, and under wise surveillance, or more probably on account of enfeebled vitality, she

had grown calmer and more reasonable. In November 1827 she underwent an operation, and in the middle of December alarming symptoms set in, and she was brought from Brocket to London (to Melbourne House) in order to have better medical assistance. She herself was in a state of calmness and resignation, complaining little, and unwilling to see many people. Her husband had been appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in May, and was of course resident at Dublin. He was kept informed of her condition. She knew she had no chance of recovery, and was only anxious to live long enough to see Lamb again. He was summoned in time, and she was able to talk to him and enjoy his society. She died peacefully about nine o'clock on Sunday evening, 26th January 1828, and was buried at Hatfield. Lamb felt her death deeply, and her influence over him never quite died away. Years later he used to ask, "Shall we meet in another world?"

Something must be said of Lady Caroline Lamb as a writer. She published three novels, of which *Glenarvon* is the most important, and some fugitive verse.

Glenarvon was published by Colburn anony-

mously—though uncontradicted rumour attributed it to her—in three volumes in 1816. An Italian translation appeared in Venice in 1817, and it was reprinted in one volume in London in 1865 under the title of *The Fatal Passion.* It is an autobiographical novel, of which the hero is Byron (Glenarvon) and the heroine herself (Lady Calantha Avondale), whose character she thus describes :

"Her feelings, indeed, swelled into a tide too powerful for the unequal resistance of her understanding ; her motives appeared the very best ; but the actions which resulted from them were absurd and exaggerated. Thoughts swift as lightning hurried through her brain ; projects, seducing but visionary, crowded upon her view ; without a curb she followed the impulse of her feelings, and those feelings varied with every varying interest and impression.

"Calantha turned with disgust from the slavish followers of prejudice. She disdained the beaten track, and she thought that virtue would be for her a safe, a sufficient, guide . . . a fearless spirit raised her, as she fondly imagined, above the common herd."[1]

[1] Disraeli describes Lady Caroline as Lady Monteagle in *Venetia,* and Mrs. Humphry Ward very skilfully uses Lady

She actually printed in the novel, without alteration or disguise, the farewell letter that Byron had sent her, but in other directions her portrait of Byron is a mere caricature. In a letter to Moore he said : "The picture can't be good. I did not sit long enough." Lady Holland is introduced into the story as the Princess of Madagascar, Rogers as the pale poet, William Lamb as Lord Avondale, Lord and Lady Melbourne as Sir Richard and Lady Mowbray, Lady Oxford as Lady Mandeville. Barbary House is Holland House, and Monteith House, Brocket Hall. It is a rhapsodical tale, sentimental and melodramatic, yet written with eloquence and vivacity. The scene in which one of the women characters commits suicide by wrapping her cloak over her horse's eyes and calmly riding over the cliff is almost fine. The novel contains a song, "The Waters of Elle," that is the best poem Lady Caroline wrote.

In 1822 she published, also anonymously, in two volumes, her second novel, *Graham Hamilton*, in which she endeavours to show the difficulties and dangers involved in weakness and irresolution. The manuscript was placed in Colburn's

Caroline's career as the motive of her novel, *The Marriage of William Ashe*.

hands two years earlier, with the injunction not to publish it then or to name the author. It contains the following verses, which had been written many years before:

"If thou couldst know what 'tis to weep,
To weep unpitied and alone,
The livelong night, whilst others sleep,
Silent and mournful watch to keep,
Thou wouldst not do what I have done.

If thou couldst know what 'tis to smile,
To smile whilst scorn'd by every one,
To hide, by many an artful wile,
A heart that knows more grief than guile,
Thou wouldst not do what I have done.

And oh! if thou couldst think how drear,
When friends are changed, and health is gone,
The world would to thine eyes appear,
If thou, like me, to none wert dear,
Thou wouldst not do what I have done."

Her last excursion into fiction was *Ada Reis*, published in three volumes in 1823, a fantastic Eastern tale, very Byronic in character. Her husband, somewhat disturbed by his wife's literary labours, wrote to John Murray severely criticising this book before publication, and begging him to prevail on the author to amend it. It contains two songs, one of which, beginning, "Weep for what thou'st lost, love," is accompanied by the music specially composed for it

by Isaac Nathan. Another edition of the book, in two volumes, was published the next year in Paris.

In "A New Canto," published anonymously in 1819, she made an attempt at satire, obviously on the Byronic model. The poem describes the end of the world, and opens thus :

"I'm sick of fame—I'm gorged with it—so full
I almost could regret the happier hour
When northern oracles proclaimed me dull,
Grieving my Lord should so mistake his power—
E'en they, who now my consequence would lull,
And vaunt they hail'd and nurs'd the opening flower
Vile cheats! He knew not, impudent Reviewer,
Clear spring of Helicon from common sewer."

All Lady Caroline's works, both prose and verse, are forgotten and repose unread on the topmost shelves of old libraries. But they form an index to her mind and character, and should be studied side by side with her recorded actions. It is usual to dismiss her as mad and unaccountable for her actions. That is the easiest way, but is it the justest ? Her gifts were by no means inconsiderable, but in the circle into which she was born there was, in the early nineteenth century, no outlet for the special activities and for the original turn of mind she possessed. Even her capacity for feeling degenerated into

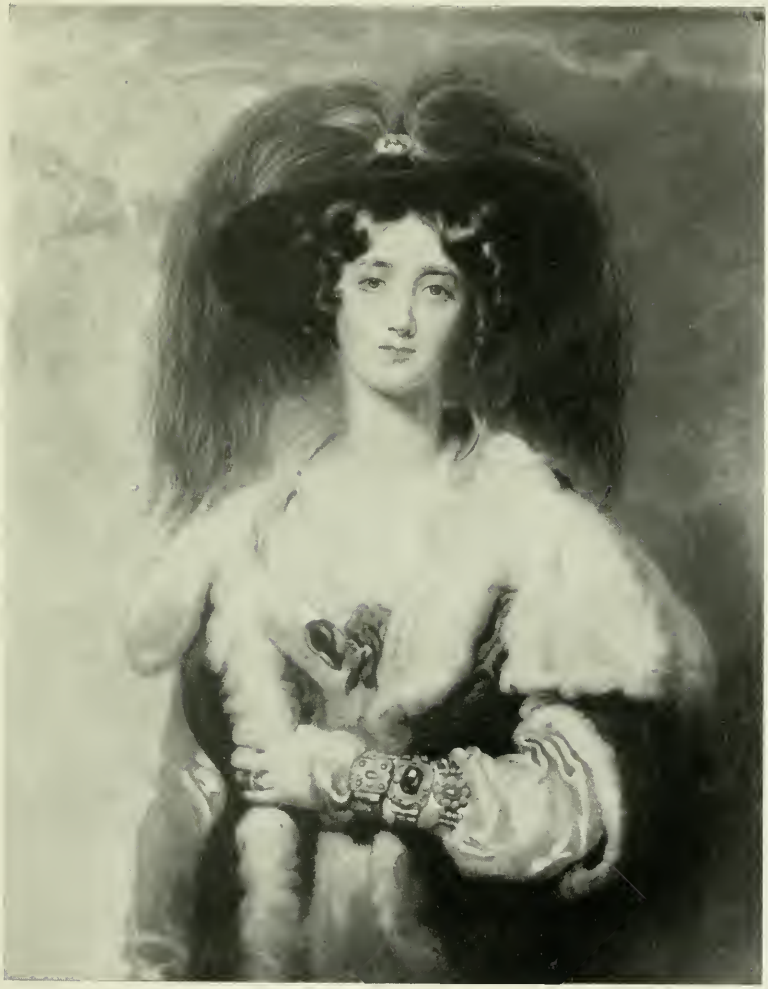
sentimentality. She lacked training. Under wise, skilful, and gentle guidance she would most probably have developed into a fine woman. As it was, she certainly did not help and probably retarded her husband's political career. But vivacity, high spirits, originality, courage combined with sensibility, are not too common in this world, and when such qualities run to waste, it is an irreparable loss out of life.

II

LADY PEEL

" . . . thou upon the statesman's path hast cast
The quiet sunshine of domestic gladness."

JULIA FLOYD, the third child and second daughter of General Sir John Floyd, Bart., K.B., was born in India, on 19th November 1795. Her father had a distinguished military career and came of a family of soldiers.—Documentary evidence points to a certain Thomas Floyd as an ancestor of the family who obtained a commission in the 1st Dragoon Guards in 1680. His son John became a captain in the same regiment and was present at the battle of Minden on 1st August 1759, and died on duty in Germany in the following September. He left two sons, John and Thomas, and two daughters, Elizabeth and Caroline. Thomas went into the Navy, and as a midshipman volunteered for the expedition to the North Pole in 1773 under the command of Captain Constantine Phipps. Horatio Nelson,



LADY PEEL

After the painting by Lawrence

also as a midshipman, took part in the expedition. Thomas Floyd kept a journal of his adventures in the Arctic regions.[1] He told his brother that "it was always his opinion that in favourable years—and at the proper season—it was very possible to approach much nearer the Pole than they did." Thomas died in 1778.

Of the daughters, Elizabeth never married, and Caroline became the wife of John Christopher Rideout of Banghurst House, Hants.

In accordance with the custom in the eighteenth century, John Floyd received his commission as Cornet in Elliott's Light Horse in 1760, when he was only twelve years old. He had lost his father two years before. He saw active service that year, having his horse shot under him at the battle of Emsdorf, and was only saved from death at the hand of a French dragoon by the intervention of Captain (afterwards General) Ainslie. The boy then had two years' leave of absence and finished his education at Utrecht under Lord Pembroke's care, who saw to it that he should also become proficient in horsemanship. He was gazetted Lieutenant in 1763 and Captain-Lieutenant in 1770. He

[1] Printed in A. H. Markham's *Northward Ho !*, 1879.

made the grand tour of Europe, 1777–79, with Lord Herbert. In 1781 he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the 23rd (afterwards the 19th) Light Dragoons, the "glorious old XIXth" of Indian history. In February 1782 the regiment sailed for India, arriving at Madras eight months later; Floyd wrote a long and most interesting letter describing the voyage to Lady Pembroke. Warren Hastings was Governor-General of India.

John Floyd's letters are delightful and instructive reading. They reveal a highly intelligent and observant man, a keen soldier, possessing great gentleness of character and a strong affection for his family and friends. He describes the country, its flora and fauna, and writes himself down a pre-Darwinian when he tells Lord Pembroke, "The monkeys are far the most innocent part of the *human species*—for I hope you do not doubt that they are a branch of our family." He was not wholly dissatisfied with his life in India, though he longed for active service. "When I am to return to England God only knows; I endeavour to avoid thinking of it. I am sensible the chances are against my returning at all. I aim indeed at a little fame, and I would fain return so as to venture to marry."

When in 1790 he was at length ordered to the field, he writes to his sister Elizabeth that he has made all provision for her, "but I do not think I shall die a bit the sooner on this account, for I propose marrying when I go back to England, and having a prodigious number of children."

Floyd commanded the cavalry with distinguished ability during the Mysore campaigns of 1790, 1791, 1792, and 1799. It had always been his opinion that the first military miracle to be performed in India would be wrought by cavalry, that a small body of well-disciplined Europeans on horseback, judiciously led, would defeat and destroy myriads of Indian enemies.

During the lull between the campaigns of 1790 and 1791 Floyd found time to carry out the wish that had long been in his heart. He was now forty-three years of age, and had fallen in love with Rebecca Juliana, the beautiful daughter of Charles Darke, a free merchant of Madras. The wedding took place at Madras, 29th January 1791, and in February Floyd was in the field again. There were four children of the marriage, all born in India, three girls—Miranda born in 1792, Julia (the future Lady Peel) in 1795, and Flavia in 1797—and one boy, Henry, born in 1793.

Both parents were devoted to their children. Mrs. Floyd attended to them entirely herself, and would not allow a native servant to go near them, for her husband writes: "She unfortunately dislikes all natives, from His Highness the Nawab to the meanest of them." The children were all healthy and good looking. Mrs. Floyd used to send her husband affectionate little notes about herself—her health was not good—and the children, referring to Julia as a delightful little kitten. These notes, in accordance with the regulations then in force for private letters sent to the army in the field, had to be 2 inches wide by $6\frac{3}{8}$ inches long, and to be rolled, not folded.

In 1798 Floyd, who was now a Major-General, began to wish to return to England as soon as all was quiet, and he could be spared, but it was July 1800 before, with his wife and four children, he reached England. Julia, with Miranda and Henry, were placed with the Rev. M. Sketchley at Parson's Green, while a permanent abode for the family was searched for and made ready for their reception. Floyd was prepared to spend a sum of £10,000 to £15,000 on the purchase of a suitable country house. He took the very greatest interest in his children's education from their earliest years, and when Miranda

was only seven we find his wife telling him that she is trying all possible ways to bring her on in her reading, and that she sketches quite prettily, and turns a letter with her pen better than her mother can do. Floyd's letters to his children when he was separated from them are delightful. In May 1801—he had become Lieutenant-General in January — he went to Tunbridge Wells with his wife and little daughter Flavia, and his sister Elizabeth, and wrote to Miranda :

" Harry's [1] desire was told his mamma that she should buy him a wife, but as that is thought to be an affair of great consequence, Harry must be very exact in describing the sort of wife he would like, whether long or short, thick or thin, young or old. Handsome, no doubt. There are some sweet creatures in a pastry-cook's shop from three inches to a matter of six inches tall. But if one of these wives is sent I am afraid he will be so fond that he will quite eat her up. In the meantime, he may consider the matter. . . .

" You must read my letters to Harry and Julia, for though I address them to you as a young lady considerably advanced in her educa-

[1] He was under eight years old, and Miranda herself was barely nine.

tion, they in part belong to you all, for I love you all most tenderly."

A house had been found at Farnborough Hill, and at the end of the month the family settled there. But unhappily it was not to be for long. At the end of January 1802 the little Flavia was taken ill with scarlet fever. Her mother insisted on nursing her herself, and took the infection. The child died on 1st February, and Mrs. Floyd, who was only thirty years of age, on 3rd February. They were buried at Farnborough, and there is a tablet to their memory in the church. The three remaining children were now taken care of by their aunt, Miss Elizabeth Floyd, who lived at Chalk Farm, near Bromley, Kent. Their father, when away from them on duty, continued to exhort the children to attend to their studies, counselled them to take great pains with their writing, for "you will find it becomes fully as easy to write well as to scrawl so that nobody can read what you say," and promised if they made good progress to take them to Sidmouth for a reward. Besides the writing of a clear hand[1] he laid much

[1] But his fatherly affection leads him to say, in regard to writing to him, "Write bad rather than not write at all."

stress on good reading aloud, and also on reading to improve their minds and to form their style of writing. They are not to read novels, "for ninety-nine times in a hundred they are sad stuff, and very poor in thought. Read solid sense — history, poetry, Shakespeare's plays, Pliny's letters," and this to children of whom the eldest was only twelve, the very age, her father reminded her, at which he set out from home to seek his fortune. They are to study arithmetic, geography, and music, especially singing. Needlework and, above all, dancing—"I think, with such insteps and ankles as some folks have, it would be sad indeed if *some folks* did not skip over the ground in true airy style of a fairy, preserving always the beautiful *aplomb*, or plumb line, without stiffness"—are not to be neglected.

On 29th July 1805 Floyd took a second wife, Anna, daughter of Crosbie Morgell of Castle Morgell, Ireland, and widow of Sir Barry Denny, Bart., of Tralee Castle, Co. Kerry. The children still remained with their aunt in England, and Lady Denny—Floyd never calls her anything else in his letters—with her husband in Dublin, where he was now on duty. He became a full General on 1st January 1812, and was appointed Governor of Gravesend and Tilbury Forts in

1814. His elder daughter Miranda married, 18th November 1815, General Sir Joseph Fuller.[1] In 1816 Floyd was created a baronet for his services in India seventeen years before. He died at his house in London, 10 Mansfield Street, 10th January 1818, aged seventy, and was buried in St. James's Church, Hampstead Road, London. His wife survived him until 4th December 1844.

Two years after her father's death, on 8th June 1820, Julia Floyd, who had developed into a very beautiful girl, was married to Robert Peel,[2] now a rising statesman. He had already held office, having been Chief Secretary for Ireland in Lord Liverpool's Government from 1812 to 1818. He was thus glad of a period of comparative repose, and for a while he and his bride led a retired life, spending a good deal of their time in the country, at Lulworth Castle, whence in November 1821 he writes to Lord Liverpool of the happiness of his domestic life and of his enjoyment of living as a private individual. They entertained their friends at Lulworth, and among their early visitors was Sir Humphry Davy. In 1822, the year in which Peel had accepted the office of Home Secretary

[1] Fuller died in 1841. His wife survived him until 23rd September 1869.

[2] He did not succeed to the Baronetcy until 1830.

under Lord Liverpool, his happiness was increased by the birth of his eldest son.

The part played by Peel's wife in his political career is best described by herself, in a letter written in 1846 on Peel's retirement from office, to her friend Sir Robert Wilson. The original is in the British Museum, and is here printed for the first time.

"*Friday Morning* (1846).

"My dear Sir Robert Wilson,—I thank you very much for your kind note. I cannot affect regret at the termination of our Political life! The undertaking was an arduous and an anxious one for my husband, and indeed I shared fully in all the anxieties attached to it. I feel that he has well fulfilled his task throughout, and I take with much welcome and many thanks all the kind and flattering things you say. I have every hope that a safe and good government may be formed. I do not dread anything much, for (amidst other reliances which I have) I feel sure that they will find a Powerful and a Successful opponent in my husband to any dangerous measures they might be induced to attempt, but I am *no Politician*, and will not bore you with talking about that, which I profess not to understand.—Always, believe me, dear Sir Robert, yours very truly,

"Julia Peel."

Thus, while she fully shared the anxieties of her husband's public life, and was his companion and confidante in every sense, Mrs. Peel was, as she says, no politician. It was hers to cast upon the statesman's path "the quiet sunshine of domestic gladness" and to solace by her "beauty's spell" and the "soft kindness" of her "pure affection"

"The life of him, whose deeds shall ever dwell
With a grateful country's recollection!" [1]

With a very short break Peel remained in office from 1822 till 1830, and from 1828 he combined the duties of leader of the House of Commons with those of Home Secretary.

In May 1830 Peel's father died, and he succeeded to the baronetcy, to a large fortune, and to Drayton Manor, the famous residence at Tamworth. He had before this built himself a fine house in Whitehall Gardens, London, with a gallery for the splendid collection of pictures he had formed. These pictures, chiefly of the Dutch and Flemish Schools, are now in the National Gallery. Peel was the friend and patron of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who painted two portraits of Lady Peel. One, a three-quarter length, seated,

[1] From lines by Mrs. Abdy, appended to an engraving of Lawrence's portrait of Lady Peel.

was painted in 1824, and the other, a half-length in a hat, a pendant to Rubens' "Chapeau de Paille," painted in 1826, is regarded as the finest portrait Lawrence ever produced.

In October 1834 Peel, with his wife and his daughter Julia, went to Italy; they had been about ten days in Rome, when a messenger, who found Sir Robert at a ball of the Duchess of Torlonia, arrived post-haste from the King, asking Sir Robert to return without loss of time and put himself at the head of the Government. Peel acquiesced and travelled back as rapidly as possible, becoming Prime Minister from December 1834 to April 1835. In the intervals of public business he was with his family at Drayton, accompanying his wife and daughter to balls and doing prodigious feats of shooting, his favourite recreation. It was in opposition, after his resignation, that Peel began to build up the Conservative party in order to maintain intact the established Constitution of Church and State. In the autumn of 1837 he again went abroad with his wife and daughter. They visited the King at Paris, and in their progress through Germany the Kings of Hanover, Würtemberg, and Bavaria seem each to have consulted Peel.

Lady Peel had a large family to bring up, five sons and two daughters. The sons were all more or less distinguished, but the most notable was the fifth, Arthur, who became Speaker of the House of Commons and was raised to the peerage as Viscount Peel in 1895. The elder daughter, Julia, married on 12th July 1841 Lord Villiers, afterwards sixth Earl of Jersey, and the younger, Eliza, became the wife of the Hon. Francis Stonor, son of Lord Camoys. Lady Peel found happiness in the companionship of her husband and children; she also took great delight in the grounds at Drayton, where she laid out a flower garden herself, and interested herself in all the outdoor arrangements. She told a country neighbour that she had a great mind to have an apiary. "Lord, ma'am, where will you get your apes from? For my part, I never could 'bide a monkey."

The tragic death during the Free Trade agitation of Edward Drummond, Peel's private secretary, was a terrible shock to Lady Peel. Drummond, who was a very able Civil Servant and a man of retiring and modest nature, had been seen travelling alone in Scotland in Peel's carriage, and of course often coming out of Peel's

house in London, by a madman named Daniel Macnaghten, who fancied he had a grudge against Peel. Mistaking Drummond for Peel, he shot him as he was walking between the Admiralty and the Horse Guards on his way to Downing Street, 20th January 1843. Drummond lingered for some days, but death occurred on the 25th. Queen Victoria was deeply distressed and wrote daily to Peel for news of the dying man. The sad event and the circumstances attending it had a very bad effect on Lady Peel's health, and her husband asked the Queen to permit them to remain in London for the present. For some time Peel went about followed by two policemen in plain clothes.

From 28th November to 1st December 1843 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert went on a visit to Sir Robert and Lady Peel at Drayton Manor. Both in town and country the Peels were noted for the sumptuousness of their entertainments and at the same time for the good taste invariably displayed. "On dîne remarquablement bien chez vous," was the observation of a foreign guest, and Disraeli is loud in the praises of the bounteous hospitality of the Peels. The interiors of both houses were attractive and delightful in every way. The London house

was especially charming, beautifully arranged, with a wealth of flowers, balconies looking on to the river. In the rooms were valuable furniture and fine pictures; some of the best of the Dutch and Flemish pictures hung in the family sitting-room.

Lady Peel felt the delights of a respite from the anxieties inseparable from public life, and enjoyed a period of repose alone with her husband at Drayton in the summer of 1846. But he was strenuous in opposition and was almost as indefatigable in his attendance at the House as when he was in office.

On the night of 28th June 1850 there was a great and memorable debate in the House of Commons on Lord Palmerston's foreign policy. Peel criticised it unfavourably in a speech that considerably reduced the majority in favour of the resolution approving the foreign policy of the Government. The debate lasted till past daybreak on the 29th, and Peel walked home in the bright midsummer morning. During the day he attended a meeting of the Commissioners of the Great Exhibition, but both he and Lady Peel felt unaccountably depressed and despondent. She suggested as a means of distraction and refreshment that her husband

should go for a ride in Hyde Park. He left his name in the visitors' book at Buckingham Palace, rode on up Constitution Hill, saluted a lady of his acquaintance who was also riding, when his horse became restive and threw him. He was placed in a passing carriage and driven home. He was taken into the dining-room, and never again left it alive. After suffering terrible pain he died on 2nd July. Burial was offered in Westminster Abbey, but in accordance with Peel's wish he was laid to rest in Drayton Church.

A peerage was offered Lady Peel by Lord John Russell. This she refused in a well-known letter to Lord John. She declared "that the solace (if any such remains for me) for the deplored bereavement I sustain will be that I bear the same unaltered honoured name that lives for ever distinguished by his virtues and his services." And if the refusal had not been founded on her own feeling she went on to say that her husband had expressly desired that no members of his family should accept, if offered, any title, distinction, or reward on account of his services to his country.

Lady Peel's grief was profound. She wrote to Lord Aberdeen, who himself had suffered

greatly from the loss of so close a friend, a month later: "He was the light of my life, my brightest joy and pride. I am desolate and most unhappy. Still I am his; our union is but suspended, not dissolved."

If anything could have consoled her, it would have been the public grief at her husband's death. All the time he lingered a crowd hung night and day about the house; such general gloom and regret had scarcely ever before been known. As the body was being taken through London to the station, weeping women ran out from the alleys to pay their last respects to him who was veritably the "People's Minister." Lady Peel, too, had the deep sympathy of her Sovereign. When the Queen passed through London on 9th December 1850 she asked Lady Peel to go and see her at Buckingham Palace. She found the widowed lady broken-hearted, and crushed by the agony of her grief. In the May of the next year the Queen sent her a copy of the portrait of Peel in her possession, in acknowledging which Lady Peel referred to her husband as "the once bright, lost joy of my past life."

Lady Peel received letters of condolence from Marie Amélie, Queen of France, the Czar of

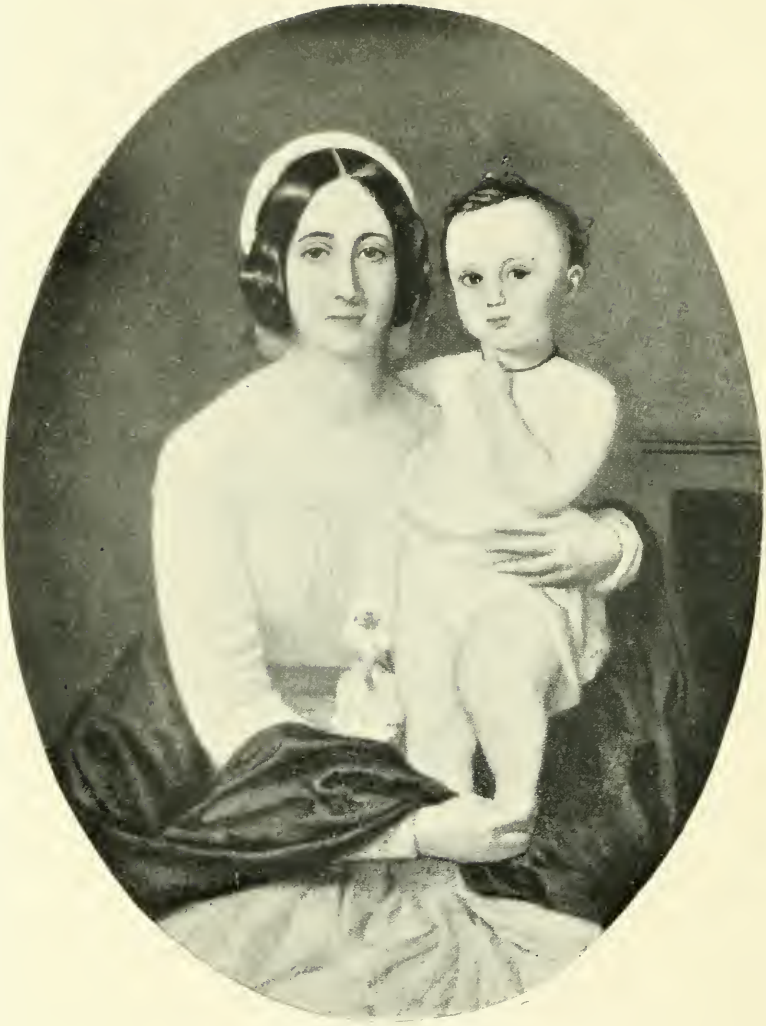
Russia, and the Grand Duke of Saxony. Guizot, writing to Lord Aberdeen, said in referring to Lady Peel, " J'ai vu leur intérieur. Le bonheur le plus pur n'en est pas moins fragile."

The house in town with all its contents was left to Lady Peel, as well as a large sum of money under the deed of settlement. The remainder of her life was spent quietly in the society of her children and grandchildren and her intimate friends.

Lady Peel died suddenly of heart failure at her house in London on 28th October 1859. She spent the evening with her daughter, Lady Jersey, whose husband had died on the 24th. She returned home, went to bed seemingly in her usual health, but when her maid went to call her the next morning she found her dead. Many griefs had told on her. The deaths of her husband, of her sailor son, Captain William Peel, who, severely wounded at the second relief of Lucknow and while still weak, succumbed to an attack of small-pox at Cawnpore in 1858, and of her son-in-law, Lord Jersey, had been too much for her naturally delicate constitution. She was buried at Drayton beside her husband.

Lady Peel's individuality scarcely stands out apart from her husband. She was ever the

gracious presence by his side, lightening his cares, cheering him when discouraged, merging her wishes and hopes in his. Her special qualities of heart and head made her the right companion for a man of Peel's temperament.



LADY JOHN RUSSELL WITH HER ELDEST SON

After Thorburn's miniature, by courtesy of Messrs. Methuen & Co. Ltd.

III

LADY JOHN RUSSELL

"A wife with all those qualities, virtues, and graces which not only adorn life, but make life worth living."

FRANCES ANNA MARIA ELLIOT, the second daughter of the second Earl of Minto, was born at Minto House, Roxburghshire, on 15th November 1815. Her mother was Mary, eldest daughter of Patrick Brydone. Lady Fanny, as she was generally known before her marriage, was one of a family of ten, five boys and five girls. She had the education usual at the time for English girls in her position. She had the run of the standard books in her father's library, so that good literature was available for her at will. Reading aloud in the evening was a family custom, and sometimes a new book from London would be enjoyed in that way. But the most important part of the girl's education was not derived from books. Her training was the wholesome discipline of a large family of brothers and sisters,

with the free outdoor life possible for children brought up in the depths of the country, and, removed as they were from a town and its ready-made distractions, with the necessity of making their own amusements. Culture and knowledge were absorbed almost unconsciously in listening to the talk of the distinguished men who were frequent guests at Minto. Lady Fanny learnt to write good English, displayed throughout her life a pretty gift for making verses, and very early began to take a deep and highly intelligent interest in contemporary politics. Perhaps she loved more than all the free life in the open air amid the beautiful scenery surrounding Minto House. Scott mentions Minto Crags, which were not far from the house, as rocks

> "Where falcons hang their giddy nest."

She would ride among the hills, fish in "Teviot's tide," accompany her brothers on their hunting or shooting expeditions among the rocks, and now and again with one or the other of them would get up before dawn, climb to the top of a neighbouring hill, and watch till the sun "brightened Cheviot grey" and

> "The wild birds told their warbling tale,
> And waken'd every flower that blows."

She was throughout her life peculiarly susceptible to the beauties of external nature, and was never really happy in a town. She used to say later that Minto was the happiest and most perfect home that children ever had.

Not only did Lady Fanny Elliot hear politics freely discussed, and with childish enthusiasm enter into the great causes which the leaders with whom she came in contact had so much at heart, but early in life she began to have experience of affairs in her own person and at close quarters. At fourteen years of age she commenced keeping a journal. In 1830 the family were in Paris, and she has recorded the aspect of things there in the months following the deposition of Charles x. At a children's ball at the Palais Royal she saw the King and Queen,[1] and described them as "nice-looking old bodies." She heard the people in the streets singing Casimir Delavigne's "Parisienne," the Marseillaise of 1830. But, notwithstanding all the glories and excitements of the French capital at that period, Lady Fanny was delighted to get back to Scotland in June 1831.

The next year her father was appointed minister at Berlin, and here again in the Prussian

[1] Louis-Philippe and Queen Amélie.

capital the girl came in contact with interesting people, Humboldt and Bismarck among them. At a ball Lady Fanny refused to dance with the latter, a circumstance she afterwards regretted.

The family returned to England in 1834, and the next year Lord Minto was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Melbourne's Government. Part of each year was now necessarily spent in London, and Lady Fanny entered into society in good earnest. Breakfast-parties at the house of Rogers or of the Duchess of Buccleuch, luncheon-parties at Holland House, dinner-parties at all the leading Whig houses, assemblies at Miss Berry's, and balls everywhere kept her time well filled. She was present at the opening of Parliament in 1836 and pitied the poor old King, who could not see to read his speech until Lord Melbourne, looking "very like a Prime Minister"—she always had a great admiration for him—held a candle for him. Lord Minto retained office at the accession of Queen Victoria, and Lady Fanny witnessed the coronation in Westminster Abbey. After the ceremony she walked through the crowd in her fine gown and reached the Admiralty in time to see the procession go past.

Lady Fanny had of course heard much of

Lord John Russell. He was still the hero of the Reform Bill, of which Sydney Smith had said that:

"All young ladies expect that, as soon as this Bill is carried, they will be instantly married; schoolboys believe that gerunds and supines will be abolished, and that currant tarts must ultimately come down in price; the Corporal and Sergeant are sure of double pay; bad poets expect a demand for their epics; and fools will be disappointed, as they always are." [1]

Lord John Russell married in 1835 Lady Ribblesdale, widow of the second Lord, and mother of four children by her first husband. At the time when Lord Minto was at the Admiralty Lord John was leader of the House of Commons, and Lady Fanny often met him and his wife, and records that she was always glad to see them. Two daughters were the issue of that marriage. The younger, born in October 1838, was named Victoria by the Queen's desire,

[1] In June 1831 Mrs. Bulwer Lytton heard a ragged newspaper boy cry:

"Good news for the poor! Great and glorious speech of His Most Gracious Majesty William the Fourth! The Reform Bill will pass. Then you'll have your beef and mutton for a penny a pound. And then you'll be as fine as peacocks for a mere trifle. To say nothing of ale at a penny a quart."

but unhappily the mother was seized with fever and died on 1st November. Lady Fanny, guileless of what was to come, grieved much over "the poor unhappy husband and his dear little motherless children." Lord John, doubtless finding such sympathy pleasant, became a frequent visitor at Putney, where Lord Minto had taken a house in order to have a quiet refuge from the stir of the Admiralty. Putney was then quite in the country; the banks of the river were beautiful with azaleas, lilac, and hawthorn, the garden was full of nightingales, and the young people lingered there late on summer evenings to listen to their song. Miss Lister, a sister-in-law of Lord John, used fairly often to bring her nephews and nieces, six children, ranging in age from fourteen years to two, out to Putney; Lady Fanny would play games with them and amuse them, and Lord John, who was now Colonial Secretary and was often consulted by his colleague, would join in the sport. Informal little cabinet meetings would be held after dinner, when, according to Lady Fanny, the nation's affairs would be discussed and the three Ministers, Lord John, Lord Minto, and Lord Palmerston, would "talk war with France till bedtime." This was in

1840. In one way or another Lord John managed to see a good deal of Lady Fanny, who was approaching the age of twenty-five. Lord John Russell was forty-eight, but Lord Minto used to declare that he never thought of him as old until he proposed to his daughter.

In spite of her youth, Lady Fanny was serious-minded, wholly without self-consciousness, never realising her beauty and attractiveness, very intelligent and observant, full of enthusiasm for every good cause that made for progress and improvement, delighting in literature and poetry, and indeed in every way suited to become the life companion of a great statesman. Lord Minto evidently saw how the land lay, and invited Lord John to accompany them to Minto when Parliament rose. Accordingly he travelled there in their company, taking with him his stepson, Lord Ribblesdale. Lady Fanny began now to realise what was in Lord John's mind. During the visit, however, he said nothing definite, but on his departure he left a letter for her in which he asked her to marry him. She answered it immediately with a refusal. This saddened him greatly, although he declared that it had been a foolish notion of his to think that she might throw herself away

on a person of broken spirits, worn out by time and trouble. The girl was evidently bewildered at the honour paid her by so distinguished a man. She owned to her mother that she liked him very much, but "not in that way." As often happens in such cases, no sooner had Lady Fanny, as she thought, put her lover out of her reach and her mind for ever than she began to think and to dream about him. Miss Lister pleaded his cause by praising him; she assured Lady Fanny that his equal was not to be found in the whole world, and told her much that forced her to admire and like him still more. Despite the girl's refusal, when the family returned to London at the beginning of 1841, Lord John continued to be a frequent visitor at the Admiralty, and to pay her attention when he met her in society at Holland House and elsewhere. And Fanny told her sister that, although she took care not to understand when he said anything to reopen the matter, she did begin to wonder if she had decided rashly. She considered herself too old to make it necessary to be desperately in love, but too young to take for her husband a man double her age, and saddled with a family of six children. Lord John probably felt that she was wavering, and took

the wisest course in such circumstances. He kept out of her way for nearly two months. The result was that on 8th June 1841 they became engaged, and were married on 20th July in the drawing-room at Minto.[1] The Duke of Buccleuch, who had married a first cousin of Lord John, lent them Bowhill for the honeymoon, and there the bride received from her mother a charming Border ballad giving the history of the wooing of the lover who

> "Cam' na wi' horses,
> He cam' na wi' men,
> Like the bauld English knights lang syne;
> But he thought that he could fleech
> Wi' his bonny Southron speech
> And wile awa' this lassie o' mine."

The lassie, however, told him to go home to his "ain countrie," but the poet continues with sly humour and memories of Duncan Gray in her mind:

> "But sairly did she rue
> When he thought that she spak' true,
> And the tear-drop it blinded her e'e;
> But he only loved her 'mair and mair,'
> For her spirit it was noble and free;
> Oh, lassie dear, relent,
> Nor let a heart be rent
> That lives but for its country and thee.
> . . . . . .
> And did she say him nay?
> Oh no, he won the day."

[1] The Mintos belonged to the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

An autumn session brought the honeymoon to a close by the middle of August; Lady John settled down in her husband's house in Wilton Crescent, and began married life in good earnest. She found absorbing occupation in the six children, and in looking after the comfort and welfare of a Cabinet Minister. But Lord Melbourne's Government was defeated on the address, and after the general election that followed the Tories were in the majority. Thus, although Lord John was leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, he was of course much more free than when in office. He and his wife and the children went to Endsleigh, near Tavistock in Devonshire, a place lent him by the Duke of Bedford. It was a beautiful spot, and Lady John, who had now leisure to realise all that the affection and sympathy and care of such a man as her husband meant, used to accompany him on his shooting expeditions, much as she hated sport that consisted in killing, and on botanizing expeditions, in which she could take her full share. There were happy visits to Bowood and Woburn, Brocket, the Grove, and Minto. But residence for some months of the year in London was still imperative. Lord John had built himself a house at 37 Chesham Place,

and there, in 1842, Lady Fanny bore him a son.[1] The claims of society, less pressing it is true than when her husband was in office, yet took up a good deal of her energy. The life was too much for her strength, and for some time her health seriously suffered. In the autumn of 1845 she was able to travel to Minto, but before the winter set in it was deemed advisable for her to go to Edinburgh in order to have competent medical advice and care. The illness turned out to be long and tedious, and it greatly irked her to be tied to her sofa while her husband was living through exciting times in London. He was summoned by the Queen on Peel's resignation to form a ministry, but as Lord Grey refused to serve with Lord Palmerston, and as Lord John felt he could not go on without both, Peel returned to office, Lord John undertaking to support him in a measure for the repeal of the Corn Laws. Lady John knew that the assumption of office would be a blow to the quiet domestic life she so loved, but her patriotism enabled her to encourage her husband during the days of suspense. She wrote to him: "My mind is made up. My ambition is that you should be the head of the most moral

[1] Afterwards Lord Amberley.

and religious Government the country has ever had." But she was not the less glad that for a short time at least Lord John should be free from the anxieties and heavy duties of the high office of Prime Minister.

In the beginning of 1846 Lady Russell was still too ill to leave Edinburgh, and she felt deeply the enforced absence from her husband's side. But they managed to keep up each other's spirits; many a rhymed nonsense letter passed between them, and Lord John would sometimes send his wife little notes in dog-Latin. Lady John was able to read and talk, and much enjoyed the visits of her Edinburgh friends, among them Lord Jeffrey. She found that conversation there had more calmness and fairness and depth than was the rule in London, where people were too much occupied with the present to trouble themselves much about the past or future. Holland House was the only place where good conversation might really be heard, and the death of Lady Holland in November 1845 had been a great blow.

As a general rule, Lady John agreed and sympathised with her husband's views and acts. But there were exceptions when her instinct and her judgment caused her to differ. The

Irish Coercion Bill of 1846 was one. She frankly wrote to him from Edinburgh on 12th March 1846 that she was convinced it would not do the slightest good, and would embitter the Irish against the English. She deplored the continual outrages and murders in Ireland, but saw a remedy only in a long course of mild and good government. Lord John replied that the best authorities thought the Bill would tend to stop the crime and murder, and that he was disinclined to throw out a Bill that might have that good effect. It was probably due to his wife's influence that he determined to move a resolution which should at the same time pledge the House to measures of remedy and conciliation. It will be remembered that the Government was defeated on the Bill, a circumstance which led to Lord John Russell's first period of office as Prime Minister from July 1846 to February 1852.

His wife was now sufficiently recovered to join him, and he leased a country house, Chorley Wood, near Chenies, so that she might have a quiet retreat in the neighbourhood of London. Early in the New Year she had another bad bout of illness. On 1st March 1847 the Queen offered Lord John Pembroke Lodge, in Richmond

Park, for a residence for his life. The place had become vacant through the death of its occupant, the Earl of Erroll, the husband of a natural daughter of William IV. The offer was gladly accepted by the Prime Minister, and the house became their permanent abode. Strangely enough, a year or two before they had gone with some of the children for a few days' change of air to the Star and Garter at Richmond. While strolling in the park they sat down on a bench under a big oak, whence they could look into the grounds of Pembroke Lodge, and said that it would be just the place for them. Now the wish had come true. They always managed to be there, when the House was in session, from Wednesday to Thursday and from Saturday to Monday. Sometimes Lord John rode all the way, but often when returning from town he would drive to Hammersmith Bridge, where his horse would be brought to meet him, accompanied by all the children old enough to ride on their ponies. Lady John would watch for the return of the cavalcade from a hill in the garden.

Pembroke Lodge stood in a bit of the old forest that had been enclosed with its grand old oaks and bracken. The grounds were lovely at

all seasons, but especially in May, with their wealth of white lilac, laburnum, hawthorn, and wild hyacinths, the blue of which under the tender green of the trees made an enchanting sight. The house stood on rising ground and commanded lovely views of the Thames valley. The flower-garden in its setting of greenery was a delight. The lawn under the spreading cedar was the scene of many enjoyable gatherings and memorable talks, for, as has well been said, Pembroke Lodge, while in the occupation of the Russells, was "a haunt of ancient peace as well as of modern fellowship." All who were distinguished in English politics or English literature, with eminent foreigners of every walk in life, would gather there on Sunday afternoons in summer, and from 1847 onwards a long stream of celebrities passed the portals of Pembroke Lodge, which, while it was the scene of an ideal family life, dispensed also much pleasant hospitality. Although Lady John loved a secluded life among her family, she fully realised that it would not do to go on long cut off from the world and its ways, and from the blessing of the society of real friends; she knew, too, that as things are ordered it was impossible to enjoy that blessing without some inter-

mixture of wearisome acquaintance. But she was occasionally cast down by the weight of the tiresome conventions imposed on such hospitality. "Why," she asks, "cannot human nature find out and rejoice in blessings of civilisation and society without encumbering them with petty etiquettes and fashions and forms which deprive them of half their value? Human nature strives and struggles and gives life itself for political freedom, while it forges social chains and fetters for itself."

One day Baroness Bunsen would drive with the Russells from their London house in Chesham Place to Kew, make the tour of the gardens and hothouses, and then go to Pembroke Lodge to lunch, where the other guests included the Duke of Wellington, the Duc de Broglie, Lord and Lady Palmerston, and Lord Lansdowne. Indeed, the list of their guests at different times would fill several pages: Thiers and Garibaldi, Baron and Baroness Bunsen, Macaulay, Froude and Lecky, Thackeray and Dickens, Thomas Moore and Rogers, Tennyson and Browning, Mrs. Beecher Stowe, Longfellow and Lowell, Sir Richard Owen, John Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, Frederic Harrison and Justin McCarthy, Sydney Smith, Dean Stanley, and Mr. Stopford

Brooke—every shade of opinion, every type of mind, was at one time or another represented.

It will be clear that Lady John was never at any period of her life a leader of political society in the sense in which Lady Palmerston was. Lady John had neither the temperament, the inclination, nor the health required for such a rôle in the world of politics. Some are of opinion that Lord John Russell's position as a statesman suffered, that he allowed himself to be too much absorbed by his domestic affairs, and that the illnesses of his wife and the care of his young family weighed too heavily upon him. This is as it may be, but the ideal domestic life of the Russells did not prevent a perfect sympathy and understanding between husband and wife in the larger affairs in which the great statesman was engaged. Lady John possessed his fullest confidence, and shared in all his hopes of progress and improvement. She could, on occasion, give him shrewd advice. As regards her own personal attitude to politics, she cared much more for the great questions of the day themselves than for the details and personalities belonging to them. She much disliked the conversation of those whom she dubbed the "regular hardened lady politicians," who were

chiefly concerned with such details and personalities, and quickly lost sight of the great problems themselves. Lady John preferred the humdrum domestic talk of ordinary womenkind. But she was not wholly condemned to endure the weariness of political discussion by the wrong people in the wrong way, or to listen to domestic chatter. Opportunities of discussing pleasanter topics often occurred. Her sympathetic charm, her receptive mind, her intellectual equipment, enabled her to gather round her friends and acquaintances of a kind that almost realised the ideal of social intercourse. She did not, as is a common practice with hostesses occupying a prominent position in society, issue an invitation to a celebrated writer or artist or scholar only when a big entertainment was toward. Such men formed an integral part of the Pembroke Lodge circle. Rogers was a frequent guest, and used to declare that he would rather share a crust with the Russells in their paradise than sup with Lucullus. Thackeray read them his lectures on Sterne and Goldsmith, and Dickens often spent the day, going to luncheon and remaining to dinner.

During the session some evenings had to be

spent in town, and some social functions had to be attended. All the more enjoyable, then, were the evenings spent quietly in the domestic circle. Reading aloud—they would each read in turn — was then their chief recreation. Among the books they read were Lamartine's *History of the Girondins*, Mackintosh's *History of the Revolution*, Prescott's *History of Peru*, Cowper's *Task*, Wordsworth's *Excursion*—reading that nowadays would scarcely come under the head of relaxation; so it is satisfactory to know that they cried over *David Copperfield* until they were ashamed.

Lord John's Premiership was not lacking in excitement. The Irish famine gave natural cause for anxiety throughout 1847. In February 1848 came the news of the deposition of Louis-Philippe. The Chartist movement was gaining ground in England, and fears of a serious outbreak were entertained. The Chartists were preparing a great demonstration for 10th April, when, after assembling on Kennington Common, they were to march to the House of Commons to present a petition. There was much discussion as to where the Prime Minister's wife would be safest on the fateful Monday (10th April 1848). It was finally decided that Downing Street would

be best. But after all nothing happened, the monster Chartist meeting dispersed quietly at the persuasion of its promoters, and the services of the 150,000 special constables, among them Louis Napoleon (afterwards Napoleon III.), were not called into requisition. Lord Palmerston, writing next day to the English ambassador in Paris, reported that the Chartists made a poor figure, and their leaders were thoroughly frightened to find the streets swarming with men of all ranks and classes blended together to defend law and property. The Prime Minister and his wife spent the Tuesday in receiving congratulations "without end." Four days later their second son was born.

Irish affairs continued very disquieting through the session, and the repose for which Lady John was ever longing seemed very far off. At the end of August she accompanied her husband on a brief visit to Ireland. They were much interested in the newly completed tubular bridge over the Conway; they walked through it, proceeding by train to Bangor, where they spent the night. Next day they crossed the Menai Straits, driving over the Suspension Bridge, took train to Holyhead whence they reached Kingstown by steamer, and finally arrived at the Viceregal

Lodge, Dublin. Thus, in 1848, a journey to Ireland was something of an adventure, and one not to be undertaken lightly. They returned by way of Scotland, landing at Greenock, visited Oban and the Trossachs, and of course Minto, and by October were back again at Pembroke Lodge. Next month they received a visit from the exiled Louis-Philippe, who, with his family, was spending some weeks at the Star and Garter, Richmond; he gave them an account of his "chute," apparently quite innocent of the unconscious humour of such a narrative in the house of the Minister he had been so proud of outwitting.

In July 1849 a third son was born, and in August Lady John was able to carry out a project she had long had at heart. Both she and her husband had from the first taken great interest in the affairs of the inhabitants of Petersham, the little village at their gates. They had been greatly concerned at the lack of means of education for the children, and now succeeded in actually founding there a little school. It had small beginnings; it was first held in a room in the village, but in 1852 a proper building was erected. The school remained a great interest to the Russells, and many a family

birthday was celebrated with a tea to the school-children under the cedar on the lawn, followed by dancing.

At the opening of the new session Lady John was in London, greatly dissatisfied as she always was when she found her time filled with visiting and parties and general entertaining, yet recognising that her troubles, such as they were, were the result of many blessings. But compensation came in the shape of an autumn visit to Minto and a Christmas at Woburn, where her boy joined in the amateur theatricals, speaking, in the character of a page, the epilogue to the play performed.

The autumn session of 1851 was spent in Wales. The next year Lord John was out of office. From February to December 1852 the Tories were in power under Lord Derby. The Whigs came back again under Lord Aberdeen, and for a short time (Dec. 1852–Feb. 1853) Lord John was at the Foreign Office.

The year 1853 was marked by various domestic events. Lady John's daughter, Mary Agatha, was born in March. In May Lord John's stepson, Lord Ribblesdale, was married to Miss Mure of Caldwell; and in June his step-daughter, Isabel, married Mr. Warburton. In July

occurred the death of Lady Minto, Lady John's mother. During these months the world of politics had been going its way. In April both husband and wife expressed their delight in Gladstone's budget, and it seemed that after the excursions and alarms of 1851 and 1852 there was a chance of things going quietly and prosperously. But by the autumn the circumstances that led to the Crimean War became acute, and a holiday in Scotland was suddenly broken up by the necessity for Lord John's presence in London, where his wife joined him in October.

In the session of 1854 Lord John Russell found himself obliged to withdraw his Reform Bill. Lady John's letters well show her feeling towards political life, and form indeed a comment on the dangers and difficulties of that career for sincere and disinterested persons. Official friends made it their business to go to see her and to lay before her all the arguments for dropping the Bill, so that she might repeat them to her husband. She was assured that her husband had such a quantity of spare character that it could bear a little damaging. Her notion was that many members were afraid of losing their seats by dissolution, and many others hated any

sort of Reform Bill and were glad of an excuse to stifle it. She almost despaired of her country, and wondered how she could prevent her boys growing up cowardly and selfish. But she listened to all, and said nothing, "because there is not time to begin at the first rudiments of morality, and there would be no use in anything higher up." Another time she wrote: "Politics have never yet been what they ought to be: men who would do nothing mean themselves do not punish meanness in others when it can serve their party or their country, and excuse their connivance on that ground."

When Lord John resigned office in 1855, after his mission as British Plenipotentiary at the Vienna Conference, his wife disapproved his action of writing to Lord Aberdeen, instead of announcing his intention in the usual way at a meeting of the Cabinet. She did her best to persuade him, if he would not do that, at least to tell some of his colleagues before writing to Lord Aberdeen, but without avail.

For four years now Lord John was out of office, and his wife was therefore less burdened with anxieties and irksome duties. The autumn and winter of 1856–57 were spent on the Continent. A visit was paid to Lady John's sister,

Lady Mary Abercromby, at The Hague, where her husband was British Minister. They went on to Switzerland, settling in a villa near Lausanne. At the end of September they crossed the Simplon, and after a few days' halt at Turin, where they made the personal acquaintance of Cavour, proceeded to Florence and took up their residence for the winter in the Villa Capponi outside the Porta San Gallo. It was Lady John's first visit to Florence, and it can readily be imagined that she quickly fell under its charm. Besides the natural beauty of the situation of the city of flowers and its wonderful buildings and art treasures, Lady John thoroughly enjoyed the society there, finding in it more cordiality and ease than in London. There were dancing and amateur theatricals for the young people, and for their parents intercourse with the men who were working for Italy's independence, men who would "greatly dare and greatlier persevere," and who became welcome guests at Pembroke Lodge when they visited England.

It is beyond the scope of this little sketch to describe the large part played by Lord John Russell in the making of Italy, but it is quite certain that his wife's enthusiasm in the cause

infected him, and urged him to action. Although Lady John was not inspired to write a "Casa Guidi (or rather a Villa Capponi) Windows" her championship of the cause of Italian liberty was as warm as that of Mrs. Browning or of Swinburne, and it has been told before, how in 1859, when Lord John was Foreign Secretary under Palmerston, the finishing stroke that gave Italy her independence was really due to Lady John's agency. Lord John understood through Cavour that Garibaldi would only retard matters if he followed up his success in Sicily by landing in Naples. As a matter of fact this was not so, Cavour being anxious for matters to come to a head without delay. Lacaita, an Italian politician who had become naturalised in England in 1855, was asked by Cavour to tell Lord John the true state of affairs so that he might use his influence with France that Garibaldi's expedition should go forward. Lacaita immediately called on Lord John, and found him engaged with the French and Neapolitan ambassadors and unable to see him at the moment. He then insisted on seeing Lady John, who was ill in bed, told her his business, and she sent down a little pencilled note to her husband asking him to come to her

at once. He arrived at her bedside immediately, in a great state of alarm, thinking she had suddenly become worse. And so England did nothing to hinder Garibaldi, and Victor Emmanuel was saluted as King of Italy in October 1860.

In 1861 Lord John accepted a peerage. He was sixty-nine years of age and had been forty-seven years in the House of Commons. He took the title of Earl Russell, as he desired to retain the name by which he had been so long known. In the spring of 1864 Garibaldi lunched at Pembroke Lodge. It was a lovely sunny day, Richmond was *en fête*, the Park full of people, and the approach to Pembroke Lodge was lined by the school-children waving flags and cheering. Lady Russell recorded in her diary that they had much interesting conversation with him, and that there was simple dignity in every word he uttered.

On Palmerston's death in 1865 Earl Russell once again became Prime Minister. In June 1866 the Ministry were defeated, Russell resigned and was never again in office. The autumn and winter (1866–67) were spent in Italy. While in Venice the Russells witnessed the entry of Victor Emmanuel by water as the King of all Italy, and felt the thrill that went

through thousands and thousands of Italian hearts as the Sovereign passed before them in his gondola.

The next years passed calmly and pleasantly. From October 1869 to April 1870 the Russells took the Villa Garbarino at San Remo, enjoying the quiet life, the beautiful scenery, the delightful climate, and the pleasant society of English friends staying there or merely passing through, and of some of the Italian residents. Strangely enough their landlord, the Marchese Garbarino, was a great patriot, and had decorated his drawing-room ceiling with portraits of Cavour, Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Lord John Russell. Among their visitors were the Crown Princess of Prussia and Princess Louis of Hesse. Lady John was delighted with their informal ways; she found them as merry and as simple as if they had had no royalty about them, and she was especially struck with their wide liberal opinions on education.

On their way back Lord and Lady Russell halted at Paris and stayed ten days at the English Embassy. They dined at the Tuileries with the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Eugénie. At the dinner the Emperor told his guests of a riddle he had asked the Empress:

" Quelle est la différence entre toi et un miroir ? " She replied that she did not know. " Le miroir réfléchit ; tu ne réfléchis pas," explained Napoleon with more wit than politeness. But his Consort retorted, " Et quelle est la différence entre *toi* et un miroir ? " The Emperor could not tell. " Le miroir est poli, et tu ne l'es pas," was the witty answer to that riddle. In the course of their visit the Russells met many distinguished persons.

On her return to England and English society, Lady Russell was struck with the superiority of its best to that of other nations, but at the same time she found that there was in all classes in this country a larger proportion of vulgarity —ostentatious, aristocratic, and coarse. She was much disturbed by the Franco-German War; considered France was in the wrong at first, but that both France and Germany were in the wrong after Sedan, when peace ought to have been made. She hated war, and looked forward to a day, scarcely closer now than it was in 1870, when an arsenal would be an object of curiosity, and people would thank God that they did not live in an age " when sovereigns and rulers could command man to destroy his brother-man."

The autumn was spent in Switzerland and

the winter at Cannes. Lord Russell was beginning to fail. He had no special complaint, no pain or chronic ailment, but old age was visibly weakening both body and mind. He was able (in 1872) to go down to the House of Lords for an important debate, and to give the Presidential address to the Historical Society, but writing, walking, reading, talking easily tired him. Until his death on 28th May 1878, Lady Russell's time was chiefly occupied in tending him. And these last years were filled with sorrows. Besides having to look on at the decay of her husband's mental and physical powers, she had to mourn in 1874 the death of her daughter-in-law, Lady Amberley, and her little daughter. The summer of that year was spent at Tennyson's house at Aldworth, near Haslemere, placed at their disposal by the poet. In January 1876 Lord Amberley died at the early age of thirty-three, and his two sons came to live permanently at Pembroke Lodge with their grandparents. On all these sad occasions Queen Victoria wrote touching letters of condolence to Lady Russell. On 28th May 1878, after thirty-seven years of happy married life, Lord Russell died. Burial in the Abbey was offered, but, in accordance with his wish, he was buried in the family vault at

Chenies, where his first wife, his son, his daughter-in-law, and his granddaughter were already laid.

Lady Russell survived her husband for twenty years, but the "golden joys of perfect companionship which made the hours fly" when they were together were over. Yet in the children who remained to her she found consolation, and in the care of her grandchildren she had the occupation and interests that exactly suited her. The Queen permitted her to remain at Pembroke Lodge, the home that had seen her joys and sorrows and hopes, the chances and changes of her life, and that was bound up with innumerable memories, so that she was still able to look after the school at Petersham. Some verses written in February 1879, on the occasion of her stepdaughter Georgiana's [1] birthday, from which I may quote a few lines, sufficiently indicate the state of her mind:

"Hushed now is the music! and hushed be my weeping
For days that return not and light that hath fled.
No more from their rest may I summon the sleeping,
Or linger to gaze on the years that are dead.

Fadeth my dream—and my day is declining,
But love lifts the gloamin' and smooths the rough way."

Many visits were paid at this time to her son Rollo, who had bought a house near Hindhead,

[1] Lady Georgiana Peel.

in Surrey. The wild scenery and the heather-covered moors reminded Lady Russell of her native country. Her interest in politics was very keen, and she supported Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy with sympathy and approval. Her letters and journals are full of defence of Home Rule, and in 1893 she would have made short work of the House of Lords, for she writes in almost prophetic tones: "I would simply declare it, by Act of the House of Commons, injurious to the best interests of the nation and for ever dissolved. Then it may either show its attachment to the Constitution by giving its assent to its own annihilation, or oblige us to break through the worn-out Constitution and declare their assent unnecessary."

Lady Russell's health, never very robust, began to fail about 1892; in 1897 she had an illness from which she only partially recovered. Early in January 1898 she suffered from influenza; bronchitis supervened, and she died at the age of eighty-three on the 17th. She was buried on the 21st at Chenies, beside her husband.

A memorial to her, erected in the Free Church, Richmond, the place of worship she attended in her later years, by a few personal

friends, was unveiled by Frederic Harrison on 14th July 1900.

A word may fitly be said here in regard to Lady John Russell's religion. Brought up in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, she became in the latter part of her life a Unitarian. She disapproved of any doctrine that ascribed to the clergy spiritual functions or privileges different from those of other men. She shared her husband's dislike of the Oxford movement. All her written and oral utterances on the subject of religion prove that for her it meant love both of God and man. Once in conversation Herbert Spencer assured her that the prospect of annihilation had no terrors for him, and Lady Russell confesses that she was thinking all the time that without immortality life was "all a cheat, and without a Father in heaven, right and wrong, love, conscience, joy, sorrow, are words without a meaning, and the Universe, if governed at all, is governed by a malignant spirit who gives us hopes and aspirations never to be fulfilled, affections to be wasted, a thirst for knowledge never to be quenched." In those thoughts we may read her Confession of Faith.

She was always for tolerance in religion, and even encouraged independence of mind in such

matters in her children, for she recognised that the voice of God might not sound the same to the child as it did to the father and mother, and that a child should never be afraid to speak freely to its parents. The only book she ever published—though her letters and journals and the occasional verses written for family events show literary aptitude and something more—was *Family Worship* (1876), a small volume of selections from the Bible and prayers for every-day use.

Lady John Russell used her very considerable intellectual gifts not for herself but for others, for her husband, her children, her friends. Her mind was intensely receptive and ever eager for information. Thinking always more of others than of herself, she could throw herself into their thoughts and feelings. Although her lot had been thrown in the world's most crowded ways, she was unworldliness itself, and she seems to have had little belief in the value of experience. When her eldest son, Lord Amberley, became engaged to be married at the age of twenty-one, she owned that she might have wished him to wait till he was a little older, but she continued :

" On the other hand, there is something very

delightful in his marrying while heart and mind are fresh and innocent and unworldly, and I even add inexperienced—for I am not overfond of experience. I think it just as often makes people less wise as more wise."

Scattered through her letters and diaries are many wise reflections, and many pointed observations on the great people she knew. Of Disraeli, when she met him in 1858, she said he was a sad flatterer, and less agreeable than so able a man of such varied pursuits ought to be. Speaking of Gladstone's visit to Scotland in November 1879, she said: "There is always something that makes me sad in such tremendous hospitality." Of a book by her sister-in-law, the *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, First Earl of Minto*, she wrote: "There are no lies in it, and therefore you must not expect a great sale."

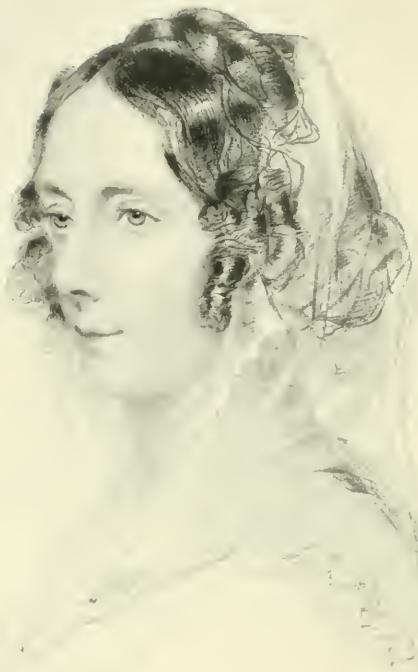
She thought much of the position of women, and although as early as 1870 she earnestly wished for legal and social equality for them, she could not shut her eyes to what woman had already been, "the equal, if not the superior, of man in all that is highest and noblest and loveliest." She strongly disapproved of setting the sexes against one another, and considered

that equal justice should be done to both without any spirit of antagonism.

Lady John Russell herself is an abiding example of the best type of woman, quick to sympathise, ready to counsel, who, while admiring her husband as a statesman and giving him every assistance in his public career, admired the man more than the politician. After the birth of their eldest son, she wrote :

> "Millions thy patriot voice attend,
> Mine, only mine, thy gentler tone;
> With thee in blissful gaze to bend
> This flow'ret o'er is mine alone."

It was the quiet, retired life she loved and preferred. Sir Henry Taylor met her in 1852—she was approaching forty—for the first time since her girlhood, when he had known her very well indeed. Of their meeting he wrote : "I recollect some years ago, in going through the heart of the city, somewhere behind Cheapside, to have come upon the courtyard of an antique house, with grass and flowers and green trees growing as quietly as if it was the garden of a farmhouse in Northumberland. Lady John reminds me of it." The words fitly sum up Lady Russell's character.



LADY PALMERSTON

After Swinton

IV

LADY PALMERSTON

"Full of vivacity, she surprises and interests; she finds her chief pleasure in conversing with persons of worth and reputation, and this not so much to be known to them, as to know them."

LADY PALMERSTON was one of the favourites of fortune. Born of a distinguished family, sister of one Prime Minister and wife of another, the trusted confidante of both, endowed by nature with beauty and charm, with keen intelligence and sprightly wit, she was a queen of society from eighteen to eighty, and for the last thirty years of that period an important factor, through her husband, in the great political affairs of the world.

Emily Mary Lamb was born in 1787. She was the only daughter of Peniston, first Viscount Melbourne, by his wife, Elizabeth Milbanke, a remarkable woman who exercised a great influence over the members of her family and of her immediate circle. Lord Byron had

great respect and admiration for her. "If she had been a few years younger," he used to say, "what a fool she would have made of me had she thought it worth her while." As it was, she remained a valuable and most agreeable friend to him. Emily Lamb's brother William, who was later, as the second Lord Melbourne, to play so great a part in his country's history, was eight years her senior. Her education was chiefly directed to perfecting her in those accomplishments that would add to her charm and gracefulness, and render her fit to take her place in society. To dance well, to sing, and to play some musical instrument, to read aloud in a pleasantly intelligent manner, to have knowledge enough of books to be able to converse easily on most subjects, to write a letter in a clear hand and with grace of expression, to understand the use of the needle and the keeping of simple accounts, would be deemed sufficient. All this could be accomplished by a governess of modern attainments, but the best education of girls highly placed in society was obtained from the conversation of those around them, of the distinguished men and women who frequented their parents' houses, and that sort of education Emily Lamb had in perfection. The young

people of that day had a merry time. At Brocket, the Melbourne's country house, there were plenty of outdoor amusements and occupations; the girls did not play hockey and cricket like their twentieth-century descendants, but they rode and hunted, fished and walked. In the early years of the nineteenth century there were the new dances, waltzes and quadrilles, to be learned, and Emily Lamb must have joined the parties given at Devonshire House or in her own home, Melbourne House, for the purpose of practising them. They would assemble at three o'clock in the afternoon at what was called a "morning" dance, with a cold dinner laid in one of the back drawing-rooms. The Tango teas of the twentieth century are not quite such an innovation as has been supposed.

In those days girls married young, and on 21st July 1805 Emily Lamb was married to the fifth Earl Cowper. Though only eighteen she at once took her place as one of the leaders of society. The others who with her ruled the world of fashion were Lady Tankerville, Lady Jersey, and Lady Willoughby. They all lived to be over eighty, and were friends to the last. These ladies had such power as leaders of society

that it was said they could even get an important debate in the House postponed if one of them had fixed a grand dinner on that evening. Lady Cowper was beautiful, intelligent, and accomplished, and soon became the most popular of the Lady Patronesses of Almack's, the most exclusive and brilliant of fashionable assemblies. When the number of hostesses entertaining on a large scale was comparatively small, need was felt of some way of meeting more often, and so in 1764 a man known as William Almack built a suite of Assembly Rooms in King Street, St. James's,[1] where for a subscription of ten guineas a series of weekly balls were given for twelve weeks. But only those who knew the saints who guarded its heaven could pass through "Almack's holy gate." A contemporary writer thus describes the Committee which ruled affairs at Almack's, and bestowed happiness by granting the vouchers of admission, or despair by withholding them, as :

"That most distinguished and despotic conclave, composed of their High Mightinesses the Ladies Patronesses of the balls at Almack's, the rulers of fashion, the arbiters of taste, the leaders of *ton*, and the makers of manners,

[1] Known to later generations as Willis's Rooms.

whose sovereign sway over 'the world' of London has long been established on the firmest basis, whose decrees are laws, and from whose judgment there is no appeal."

The Committee was presided over by Lady Jersey, and included, besides Lady Cowper, the Ladies Castlereagh, Sefton, and Willoughby, and the Princesses Esterhazy and Lieven. Almack's was the "seventh heaven" of the fashionable world, and people would almost sell their souls to gain admission. Its exclusiveness will be understood when it is realised that of the three hundred officers of the Foot Guards only six were admitted.[1] Quadrilles were first danced there in 1815. The rules as to punctuality and the costume to be worn, especially by the gentlemen, were extraordinarily strict, and had to be obeyed by all, without respect of person. One of the rules, that seems, however, to have been relaxed later, was that no one was to be admitted after 11 p.m. One night shortly after its enactment that hour had already struck when an attendant announced that the Duke of Wellington was at the door. "What time is it?" asked Lady Jersey. "Seven minutes after eleven, your ladyship." She paused a

[1] In 1814.

moment, and then said with emphasis and distinctness, "Give my compliments—give Lady Jersey's compliments to the Duke of Wellington, and say that she is very glad that the first enforcement of the rule of exclusion is such that hereafter no one can complain of its application. He cannot be admitted." This occurred in 1819. Lady Jersey is described in Disraeli's *Sybil*, under the name of Lady St. Julians, as one of the great political ladies who "think they can govern the world by what they call their social influences." Almack's made a very brilliant scene: the halls were large, beautifully lighted, and the music and the floor of the best. All the arrangements tended to ease and comfort, there was no ceremony, no regulations or managing—that is to say, once within the charmed circle, there were no hindrances to perfect enjoyment and perfect freedom within the limits of good breeding. It may be mentioned here that Lord Palmerston, considered to be something of a dandy in the second decade of the nineteenth century, was at that time one of the leading lights of Almack's, and a special favourite of Lady Jersey and Lady Cowper. Bulwer, the novelist, who as a young man was a frequenter of Almack's, wrote a poem entitled "Almack's,

a Satiric Sketch " [1] in which he pays testimony to the beauty and charm of Lady Cowper in the following lines:

" But lo! what lovely vision glides
So graceful through the charmed throng?
Oh, ne'er did Daughter of the tides
The yielding waters float along
With shape as light and form as fair
As those which spell the gazer there.

Enchanting C*w**r, while I muse
On thee—my soul forgets awhile
Its blighted thoughts and darken'd hues,
And softens satire to a smile."

Both at Panshanger, the Cowper country seat, and in London, Lady Cowper gathered round her a varied and interesting coterie; among her guests were the Princess Lieven, the Duchesse de Dino, Talleyrand, Pozzo, Alvanley, Luttrell, Lord and Lady Holland, Panizzi, and Lord Palmerston, who from 1809 to 1828 was Secretary-at-War, but without a seat in the Cabinet. It was not until 1830 that he became Foreign Secretary and a Cabinet Minister. Lady Cowper was, in fact, his Egeria. He was attracted by her grace and charm, her intelligence and quick perception. The letters he wrote to her at this time were chiefly on political matters,

[1] The poem appears in *Weeds and Wildflowers*, by E. G. L. B., a volume privately printed at Paris in 1826

and it is known how he relied and acted on her judgment. Her brother, Lord Melbourne, whose career she followed with the deepest interest,—indeed he had few political thoughts apart from her,—had an equally high estimate of her discernment and sagacity, and he too asked and acted on her counsel. Thus she was, from the first, intimately acquainted with politics and affairs.

She bore Lord Cowper three children—one son and two daughters. The eldest daughter, Emily, —both the girls were beautiful, but especially the younger, Frances,—married, 9th June 1830, Lord Ashley, eldest son of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury. All the men, we learn, were in love with Lady Emily, and it took her some time to make up her mind to accept Lord Ashley, who was handsome and attractive. Lady Cowper liked him immensely, indeed she declared in joke that she was more in love with him than her daughter was, and the girl's indecision caused her mother much perturbation of soul. "I shall really break my heart," she said, "if she decides against him." One of Lady Emily Cowper's accomplishments as a girl seems to have been recitation, and Princess Lieven complained how, when on a visit to Panshanger in 1828, one even-

ing Emily was shouting "Bethgelert" three rooms off,—the Princess was playing whist,—and that as she had already had to hear "cette terrible Chanson," containing thirteen stanzas, twice, she had no wish to hear it again.

Naturally, Lady Cowper had many admirers, among whom, however, Lord Palmerston held the chief place, and it was inevitable that a certain amount of gossip should get about. One day a curious incident caused Lady Cowper to overhear a conversation about herself. She had, because the house was full, turned her dressing-room into a bedroom for Rogers. Luttrell, another guest, came in to talk to Rogers, and neither realising who was in the next room, began to discuss Lady Cowper and her "beaux." Rogers's voice was too weak for her to hear what he said, but she heard distinctly Luttrell's replies, two of which were: "Oh, come, come, women will have their beaux." "Well, I really don't know, but I have loved her from a child." It is a warning to guests not to discuss their hostess when on a visit to her, even in the privacy of their bedchambers.

Lord Cowper died on 27th June 1837.

No one was greatly surprised when Lady Cowper's engagement to Lord Palmerston was

announced. Her children disliked the idea of the marriage, but were ultimately reconciled to it, and became devoted to their stepfather. The wedding took place on 16th December 1839.

It was only now that Lady Palmerston fully entered into her own, as it were, and became a real force in public and political life. True, she was fifty-two years of age, but she had in marvellous fashion preserved her beauty and even her youth. Indeed, old age itself when it came scarcely impaired her qualities of mind and heart or her beauty. Moore records meeting her in June 1839, at a large party, in the sentence, "Lady Cowper looking as young and handsome as *any* daughter," and Lady Lyttelton, who met her at Windsor in October 1840, mentions that Lady Palmerston was "in beauty and in great agreeableness and grace." That kind of testimony meets us in all the letters and memoirs of the time. Everybody found her handsome and intelligent and interesting, and to many men she was associated with their first *beaux jours* and early tickets for Almack's. Her beauty and charm appear in all her portraits, from the delightful picture of her as a girl by Lawrence to photographs taken of her as an old woman.

She had fair hair and bright blue eyes, with a clear pink-and-white complexion. Her expression showed her good-nature and kindliness of temper. Lady Palmerston had no idea of making herself of importance. She was deeply and sincerely in love with her husband—to the end of his life she began her letters to him, "My dearest love," and thought it a terrible thing to be separated from him even for a few days—and it was his career alone that filled her mind. It and it only was the fixed purpose of her life. She spent herself in helping him, in furthering his interests and upholding his political views and acts. She employed her wit and charm and good taste to justify all he did, and sometimes to soften the bitterness his acts provoked. She conciliated those whom it was well for him to have on his side, and sought where possible to render opposition less hostile. Lord Palmerston took his bride to Carlton Terrace, and in March 1840 he writes: "We have been giving some dinner and evening parties which have had a very good political effect, have helped the party, and have pleased many individuals belonging to it."

Disraeli, in his striking fashion, has described the difference between society in Lady Palmer-

ston's day and in the last decade of the nineteenth century :

"The great world then, compared with the huge society of the present period, was limited in its proportions, and composed of elements more refined though far less various. It consisted mainly of the great landed aristocracy, who had quite absorbed the nabobs of India, and had nearly appropriated the huge West Indian fortunes. Occasionally an eminent banker or merchant invested a large portion of his accumulations in land, and in the purchase of parliamentary influence, and was in time duly admitted into the sanctuary. But those vast and successful invasions of society by new classes which have since occurred, though impending, had not yet commenced. The manufacturers, the railway kings, the colossal contractors, the discoverers of nuggets, had not yet found their place in society and the senate. There were then, perhaps, more great houses open than at the present day,[1] but there were very few little ones.

"The season then was brilliant and sustained, but it was not flurried. People did not go to various parties on the same night. They re-

[1] 1881.

mained where they were assembled, and, not being in a hurry, were more agreeable than they are at the present day. Conversation was more cultivated; manners, though unconstrained, were more stately; and the world, being limited, knew itself much better."

Lady Palmerston's salon became the headquarters of the Liberal party and the best barometer as to affairs. She took care, however, that, while her gatherings retained their exclusiveness, they should not be limited to politicians of her husband's party. Distinguished foreigners, the whole of the diplomatic circle, a sprinkling of men of letters, were to be seen at her Saturday evening receptions as well as at Broadlands, Lord Palmerston's country seat. Lady Palmerston's drawing-rooms were neutral ground where men and women of all shades of opinion met in friendly intercourse. It was this neutrality that foreigners found so remarkable. A French diplomatist once said to Disraeli at Lady Palmerston's reception, "What a wonderful system of society you have in England! I have not been on speaking terms with Lord Palmerston for three weeks, and yet here I am; but you see I am paying a visit to Lady Palmerston."

She knew all the State secrets, and often acted as her husband's private secretary, copying the private letters with her own hand. The work was enormous, but she never flinched from it. Such was her discretion that there was no fear of revelations, though she would sometimes quarrel with the ambassadors or their wives. On one occasion[1] Persigny, the French ambassador, had to apologise to her. She talked quite freely about affairs, and wrote of them to her friends, but always with great astuteness. Thus she would reveal just enough in order to draw her interlocutor on, knowing full well how and in what direction the information she gave would work. Many discussions took place in her drawing-rooms that influenced European affairs. Her tact and intuition were infallible, and Lord Palmerston always paid attention to her suggestions.

She had, moreover, keen insight into character. People soon came to know her influence with her husband, and when they wanted anything of him, tried to accomplish it through her. She said impatiently in 1846 that they had nothing to give, but were tormented with applications. Yet she was sometimes

[1] In 1860.

instrumental in obtaining posts for those who sought them. It did happen now and again that her outspoken comments on current affairs gave annoyance. In 1860, when the Paper Duties Bill was under discussion, she was present in the gallery during the debate, and openly expressed her wishes that it might be rejected by a large majority. Her language so shocked some of the Whigs that the Duke of Bedford was asked to remonstrate with her on the way she talked. But there was method in her madness, for when her husband thought as she did, and was debarred from speaking openly, she voiced his opinions as her own, and so gained a hearing for them. It will be remembered that the rejection of the Bill by the House of Lords caused a collision with the Commons, and Palmerston had, as his biographer puts it, to vindicate "the rights of the Commons while sparing the susceptibilities of the Lords." The duties were repealed in 1861.

In 1841 Lady Palmerston's daughter, Lady Frances Cowper, who was a great beauty, and had been one of the train-bearers at Queen Victoria's coronation, became engaged to Lord Jocelyn, eldest son of the Earl of Roden, a clever handsome young man of twenty-eight

and a great traveller. He had been in love with her for three years. He sent his proposal from Calcutta, but could not wait for the reply, as he had to start at once for Chusan. He did not return until a year and a half later, and reached Liverpool without knowing whether he might not find her married to some one else. But his fair lady had loyally waited. Lord Jocelyn's father was a great Tory, but Lady Palmerston did not allow herself to be disturbed by what she called a trifle, since she put her daughter's happiness first, and declared that "love and politics do not go together." The marriage took place on 25th April, and the same year Lady Jocelyn was appointed extra Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Victoria. It meant, of course, that the bride and bridegroom would be much separated, but the Queen promised that the waiting should be as much as possible in London.

Lady Jocelyn was early left a widow. When, in 1854, her husband's militia regiment was quartered at the Tower there was an outbreak of cholera. Finding him unwell one morning, the doctor advised Jocelyn to join his wife at Kew, where they were living. In the cab he felt so much worse that he stopped

it at Lady Palmerston's house in Piccadilly. He had taken cholera, and died in the back drawing-room. Lady Jocelyn, who had by chance driven into town, found him in a dying condition.

In the autumn of 1844 Lady Palmerston made a tour in Germany with her husband, dining with the King of the Belgians at Laeken, with the King of Prussia at Berlin, and the King of Saxony at Dresden. The next year her friend Lady Holland died, leaving her £300, a portrait of Lord Melbourne by Landseer,[1] and all her fans.

A pleasing incident, which showed in what estimation Lady Palmerston was held by the party, occurred in 1850, when a hundred and twenty Liberal Members of Parliament presented her with a full-length portrait of her husband by Partridge. She was extremely proud of the compliment paid her. The painting, now at Broadlands, was hung on the staircase of their town house.

Lady Palmerston could not bear, as I have said, to be separated from her husband. In January 1851 she went to Brighton with Lady

[1] It is now at Broadlands. Although the background is unfinished it is a fine and characteristic piece of work.

Ashley and her children, leaving him in town, and her letters to her "dearest love"—she was sixty-four and he was sixty-seven—show how not to see him even for the space of a fortnight was unthinkable. One day she wrote: "Whenever you write me word that you have opened your carpet bags I shall make a bonfire on the Steyne." When he was away from her her letters to him are filled with adjurations to take care of himself, not to go sailing on Luggan Lake, or if he bathes, not to go out of his depth.[1]

She wrote to him nearly every day while she was at Brighton, and the following extracts from her letters are of interest:

"Brighton,
17*th January* 1851.

"I got down very safely yesterday, but I never was in a more shaky train, however. The Ashleys and I were together, and we got down in an hour and ten minutes, but I think for the future I shall always avoid express trains. There is something so awful in the notion of not stopping anywhere, so that if unfortunately there should occur anything wrong about your carriage you would have to go on fifty miles without any help or the least power of getting your distress

[1] 3rd September 1847.

known. It is like the horror of a bad dream to imagine the possibility of such a casualty."

Some persons will sympathise with her feelings in an express train.

In the following letter she refers to the Bull issued by the Pope in September 1850, creating Roman Catholic Bishops in England. It roused great excitement and hostility in the country.

"31*st January* 1851.

"I hope you read the *Times* leading article yesterday on the dangers of Popery, so very true, and all so well described. It is *impossible* for the well-being of any Protestant country to allow the system which the Pope is trying to introduce here. To have such a band of conspirators leagued together to overthrow Protestantism in England, and leaving no means untried to compass their ends and to work on the weak-minded by the most unscrupulous agents. . . . The Pope starting a new Pope in Ireland after all the rout made about bishops here shows that he is not inclined to go back an inch, but rather to force on and increase his aggressions."

The Ecclesiastical Titles Act declaring the Papal Bull null and void was passed in July

1851. As a legislative measure it was, however, a dead letter, and was repealed in 1871.

In December 1851 Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister, required Lord Palmerston to resign his office of Foreign Secretary, on the ground that he had exceeded his authority as Secretary of State in his communications on his own authority to France with reference to the recognition of the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon. Lord Palmerston had personally expressed his approval of the action to the French ambassador in London. The affair has passed into history and only concerns us here because Lady Palmerston fancied her husband was the victim of a conspiracy. She wrote angrily to this effect to Lord John, whom she had known since 1830, and who was one of her oldest friends. In his reply he told her that the tone of her letter would justify him in not answering it, but it was necessary for him to assure her that there had been no conspiracy, that he had acted alone to save others from responsibility. He further said that the loss of Lady Palmerston's friendship added to the weight of his regret at the whole business. As a matter of fact, Lord Palmerston was soon asked to go back, and it is quite certain that it was Lady Palmerston who contrived to let it be

known in the proper quarter that he was willing and anxious to do so. In 1868 Lady Palmerston asked Lord John, as Palmerston's *oldest and best friend*—the italics are hers—to unveil the statue and window to Lord Palmerston's memory in the town and abbey of Romsey. Lord John was only prevented from acceding to her request by the death of his brother-in-law, Lord Dunfermline. So that the difference between Lady Palmerston and Lord John was not very serious or lasting.

Lady Palmerston thought her husband always in the right, and when he resigned in 1853 because he did not consider the Government's policy towards Russia sufficiently decided, she wrote to Charles Greville to explain his reasons. Greville called on her, and found her in high good humour, and pleased at the testimonies of approbation her husband had received. But she was again careful to make it known in the right quarters that he had acted hastily and was ready to return, and thus it was in great measure due to her that the difficulty was adjusted. She had written to Monckton Milnes on 2nd December 1853: "Nobody looks very comfortable here; the Turkish question worries a great many, and Reform others, and I believe

both might have been avoided." She used to say that every event in which her husband was concerned left him standing higher than he did before. She was immensely proud of him, liked him to be first, was provoked at Gladstone's enormous success in 1853, and always hated the idea of her husband being out of office. Therefore, notwithstanding the far harder work entailed both on himself and on herself, she was greatly elated when he became Prime Minister for the first time in 1855. Yet later on she confessed, "I would rather that my husband was only Foreign Minister or Home Secretary, for since he became Prime Minister I see nothing of him. He never comes to bed till four or five o'clock." Except on Saturdays and Sundays, he hardly ever dined with her. He had his dinner at three p.m., went down to the House at four, and except some tea had nothing till he came home, seldom before one a.m.

Every Saturday evening in the season Lady Palmerston held a reception. In 1858 they left Carlton Gardens for Cambridge House, 94 Piccadilly,[1] and both she and Lord Palmerston took the greatest interest in fitting up and arranging their new abode. At her parties were

[1] Now the Naval and Military Club.

to be met the best society, consisting almost entirely of distinguished people, for in those days there were not more than about five hundred persons who were what is known as "in Society." Indeed, Lady Palmerston always wrote the name of the guest on the invitation cards with her own hand, so that she really did know who came to her receptions. Yet, in spite of these precautions, there occasionally appeared a few people who had not been invited. She never betrayed herself, and used to say that, if it amused them to come, they were quite welcome. She was good-natured and patient with bores. But if any member of his own party spoke or voted against Palmerston in the House, he would receive no invitation, and his name would not be replaced on the list until he had thought better of his disloyalty. She could also be very angry with any one who caballed against Lord Palmerston or overstepped the bounds of fair party warfare in attacking him. But even so her anger was shortlived, and she was quick to pardon. Lady Palmerston took much trouble to please the wives of those it was politic to conciliate. Disraeli in *Sybil* ironically summed up the general rules by which political hostesses were guided when he wrote: "Ask them (*i.e.*

Members of Parliament) to a ball, and they will give you their votes; invite them to a dinner, and if necessary they will rescind them; but cultivate them, remember their wives at assemblies, and call their daughters if possible by their right names, and they will not only change their principles or desert the party for you, but subscribe their fortunes, if necessary, and lay down their lives in your service."

If there happened to be a political crisis the greatest excitement would prevail at these parties. Sometimes the lion of the evening would be a man who was not generally to be met at fashionable gatherings. In 1859 Cobden was present one evening, and the fashionable ladies stared at him through their glasses as if he had been some strange curiosity, and brought up their friends to stare also.

The Palmerstons also gave dinners which were noted for the sumptuousness of the fare and the distinction of the guests. The only drawback was the extraordinary unpunctuality of the host and hostess. It was useless to arrive at the time stated in the invitation; neither would be ready, not even if it was a big diplomatic dinner. How the cook managed to send up an excellent meal all the same

seemed a miracle to the waiting and long-suffering guests, but it is to be supposed that Lady Palmerston named one hour to her guests and another to her cook. A guest relates how, on arriving at 8.30 p.m., he found Lord Palmerston just going out for a ride before dinner in Rotten Row. The grey horse that Palmerston always rode was his wife's despair, for she had four grey carriage horses, and feared lest people should think he rode one of them. Similar unpunctuality was practised by the Palmerstons when they dined out. At a dinner given by Guizot, when he was Ambassador in London, Lady Holland was a guest. It happened that she had had no lunch and was dying with hunger. All the guests were assembled except the Palmerstons. Lady Holland was at first out of temper, then in despair, and lastly subsided into inanition. When at last the defaulters arrived and a move was made, Lady Holland asked Lord Duncannon to take care of her, as she was sure she should not reach the dining-room without fainting.

Perhaps the social side of Lord and Lady Palmerston was seen at its best in the country-house parties at Broadlands. Broadlands is near Romsey in Hampshire. The house is

situated in a fine park, and the river Test flows through the grounds, passing near the house, and adding greatly to the charm of the view from the windows. The architecture is Elizabethan, one room still preserving the beautiful oak panelling, but in the eighteenth century the front was cased in classic architecture with huge porticoes. The interior is commodious and comfortable, and the rooms, which are all of a pleasant size and shape, are full of treasures. The present owner, Mr. Wilfrid W. Ashley, M.P., great-grandson of Lady Palmerston, has arranged the library as it was in Lord Palmerston's day, with the high desk—he always wrote standing up—and other articles by which the great statesman was habitually surrounded. A billiard-room is a feature of the house, for Palmerston was very fond of the game, and liked to win if his wife was looking on.

In the country Lady Palmerston was a perfect hostess. She understood that foreigners expected to be entertained and not to be left more or less to their own devices, as is the English custom, and was always ready to drive or walk with them. The habit of leaving guests in a country house to look after themselves has grown now almost to an abuse, and sometimes,

except that there is no bill to settle at the end, it often seems almost as if one had been staying at an hotel where one chanced to know a few of the other visitors. The parties must have been very interesting. Among the guests at different times were all the ambassadors to Great Britain and their wives, members of all the great English families, and writers like Laurence Oliphant, Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), and Mrs. Augustus Craven, author of *Récit d'une sœur.*

The same unpunctuality, however, prevailed at Broadlands as in London. Dinner was nominally at eight, but was seldom on the table before nine. This indifference to time seems to have been innate in Lady Palmerston's family, for even at Panshanger in 1841, when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were on a visit there, it is recorded that though there was an agreeable absence of formality, everything was immensely unpunctual, and the poor Queen was made to wait for dinner and drives "till anybody but herself would be furious."

Besides managing the household at Broadlands and Cambridge House, Lady Palmerston had her own property to look after: Brocket, left to her by her brother, Lord Melbourne, and her Scottish estates. She saw into everything

herself, inspected all the accounts, and never left anything to servants that was not properly within their province. This gave her constant occupation, and the business connected with her possessions was often of an arduous character. In 1860 there was a good deal of correspondence and trouble over the sale of a mill at Brocket, and in 1862 she paid a visit to her "Scotland estates," which she had not looked over for nine years. She described it as "something like the treadmill," with the talking, "walking, inspecting farms and fields and mines, making the agreeable, and listening to all the various conflicting reports on the same subject." Her labours, she declares, were much increased by "all the glorification and popularity of Palmerston, which burst out on every opportunity."

In 1861 Palmerston was made Warden of the Cinque Ports. Lady Palmerston evidently went to Walmer Castle, the residence belonging to the office, before her husband had seen it, for she wrote to him that the place was splendid, "so large a house and such a quantity of gardens and trees. I am sure you will be delighted with the place, and the sea is covered with shipping and a beautiful setting sun to light them up."

The beauty of the gardens at Walmer Castle is proverbial.

Lady Palmerston was fond of the theatre, and it is interesting to find in 1863 the following impression of a new play that was to have a great vogue :

" Such a good play, written by Tom Taylor, called *The Ticket-of-Leave Man,* so affecting that everybody in the theatre was touched by it, some quite crying."

In old age the Palmerstons were devoted to each other. To the end of his life Palmerston's attitude to his wife was that of an ardent lover; he was always full of loving attentions. He had few intimate friends; her close companionship seemed to make it unnecessary, and it is most probable that no other person at any time shared his confidence. His consideration for her was pathetic, and he did all in his power to conceal from her how ill he really was during the months before his death. He always assumed cheerfulness in her presence. He died on 18th October 1865 at Brocket, and was buried in Westminster Abbey near the grave of Pitt.

Lord Palmerston left his property to his wife for her life, and it was then to go to William

Cowper. She gave up the house in Piccadilly, and Bulwer Lytton sold her Breadalbane House, 21 Park Lane, where she settled in February 1866. She was now seventy-eight, almost unaltered in appearance, indeed a very handsome old lady, and, though subdued at times, she preserved her cheerful spirits. Age had not dulled her sensibility nor her susceptibility to impressions of more than ordinary keenness. She took the same vivid interest as of old in things and in people. Very rarely did she show any sign of the despondency common to age. In thanking Abraham Hayward for his pamphlet on the Junius Letters, a subject in which she had always taken great interest, she wrote : " There are so many disagreeable things nowadays in every way that it is pleasant to be able to take shelter in the past." [1] She liked at all times to surround herself with young and pretty people. The very year of her death she would go to her grandson Jocelyn's room between eleven and twelve at night, taking with her the *Times* or some other newspaper, and read out to him long speeches without spectacles, with only a couple of candles for light. She was keenly opposed to Gladstone's Bill for the

[1] 21st January 1868.

Disestablishment of the Irish Church,[1] and would talk about it, standing the while, with all the fire and energy of a young girl.

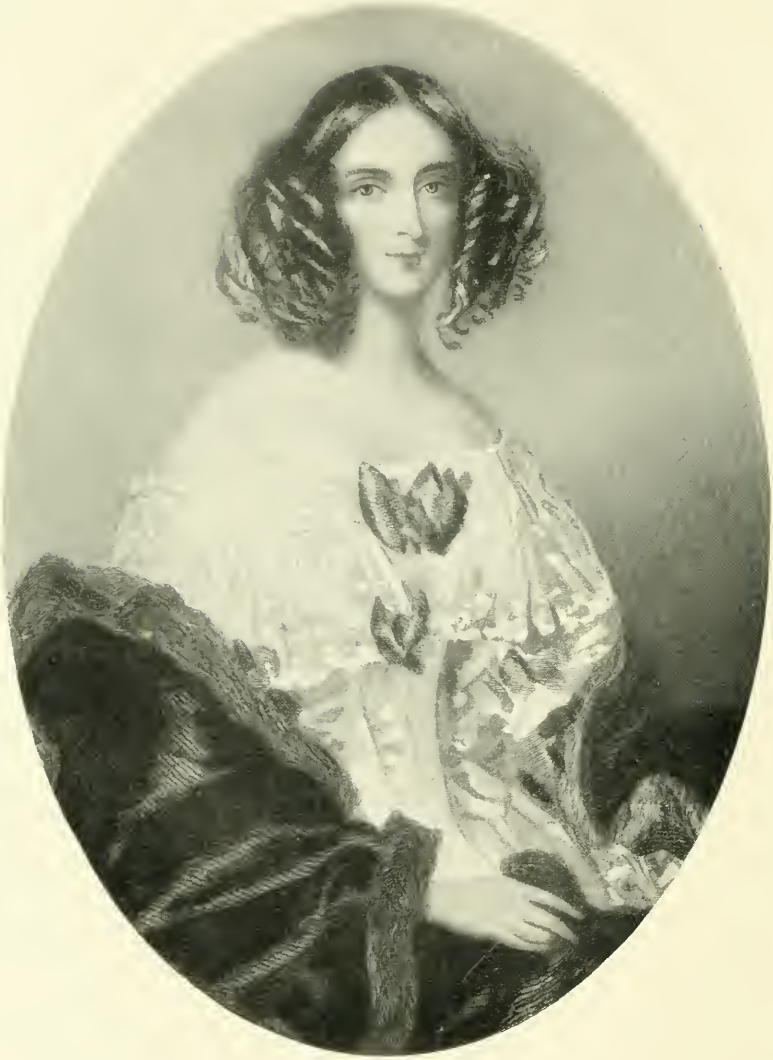
She was saddened by the deaths of her old friends, Lady Jersey in 1867 and Lady Tankerville in 1865, intimates of more than fifty years' standing, for Lady Palmerston was loyal in her friendships.

She was only ill for a fortnight before her death, which occurred at Brocket on 11th September 1869. She was buried in Westminster Abbey by the side of her husband.

Lady Palmerston affords an example of the influence wielded by a woman of intelligence, beauty, and charm through the first half of the nineteenth century. She had "l'habitude et l'intelligence des grandes affaires" that were openly discussed before her. She was past-mistress in the art of conversation, and thoroughly understood that a good talker must both originate and sympathise, must impart information and elicit it from others. Her tact was perfect. While she had a passionate feeling for her own party, she could be gracious to those opposed to it. Her salon was for a long series of years the pleasantest and most brilliant

[1] 1868.

in London. She had many friends and few enemies. Her influence on society was direct, that on politics indirect, because it worked through her husband. When a woman is already in so high a position that no one can think she is seeking her own advancement, when she is eminently high-minded and warm-hearted, when she is never petty or false or ungenerous or uncharitable, then such an influence as she may exercise either directly or indirectly can only make for good. There is no doubt that Lady Palmerston, by her personal amiability, her vivacity of mind, charm of manner, and experience of the world, helped to strengthen the position of her husband.



MRS. DISRAELI (COUNTESS BEACONSFIELD)

From the painting by A. E. Chalon, R.A., at Hughenden

V

MRS. DISRAELI

"It is the spirit of man that says, 'I will be great,' but it is the sympathy of woman that usually makes him so."

THE parents of Mary Anne Evans lived at Bramford Speke, near Exeter. Their daughter was probably born at Exeter, where we know she was baptized on 14th November. Her father, John Evans, a lieutenant in the Navy who had worked his way up from the bottom of the Service, died on active service while his daughter was an infant. His wife was Eleanor Viney, a member of a family of good position in the west of England. In fact, Mrs. Disraeli inherited part of her fortune from her uncle, Sir James Viney. The girl was beautiful, and in 1815 married Wyndham Lewis, M.P. for Cardiff, a man of birth and fortune. He owned considerable property in Glamorganshire.

Mrs. Lewis was a great friend of Rosina Wheeler, the wife of Edward Bulwer, and it was at a party at their house, on the evening of 27th

April 1832, that Disraeli first met the lady who was ultimately to be his wife. She asked particularly to be introduced to him. Writing next day to his sister he describes her as "a pretty little woman, a flirt, and a rattle." She told him that she liked silent, melancholy men, and Disraeli, making mental note of her singular volubility, replied that he had no doubt of it. But he went much to her house in London the next year, and became, as time progressed, very friendly with her and her husband. So when, at the election of 1837, a second Conservative candidate was needed for Maidstone—Wyndham Lewis was the other—Disraeli was asked to stand. His success was doubtless in great measure due to his friendship with the Wyndham Lewises. Mrs. Lewis, in a letter to her brother,[1] prophesied that in a few years Disraeli would be one of the greatest men of the day, and observed, "they call him my Parliamentary protégé."[2] Count D'Orsay offered him the sage advice: "You will not make love! You will not intrigue! You have your seat: do not risk anything! If a widow, then marry!" In August Mrs. Lewis paid a first visit to the

[1] 29th July 1837.

[2] Another time she writes of Disraeli as "our political pet."

Disraelis at Bradenham and was delighted with everything. Another visit was paid at the end of the year. Wyndham Lewis died suddenly of heart disease on 14th March 1838.

There is no doubt that Mrs. Lewis's affection for Disraeli had been steadily growing. It is said that she told a friend she was sure Disraeli cared for her, because he had made love to her in her husband's lifetime. Mrs. Bulwer, who never allowed friendship to interfere with her propensity for ill-natured gossip, declared that Disraeli proposed even before the funeral, and that friends calling to condole with her on her husband's death were asked to congratulate her, for "Disraeli has proposed." Through April and May he wrote constantly to her, sent her flowers from Bradenham, called himself her faithful friend, ready to give her, if she so willed it, his advice, assistance, and society. He signed his letters, "Your affectionate D." In July he saw the review in Hyde Park, in celebration of Queen Victoria's coronation, from Mrs. Wyndham Lewis's house, 1 Grosvenor Gate.[1] By the end of July he was telling her that she was never a moment absent

[1] Now 29 Park Lane.

from his thoughts and how much he loved her. He sometimes accompanied her to the theatre; he presented his Coronation Medal to her.

It is generally assumed that Disraeli did not marry for love. Mrs. Lewis was forty-five, twelve years older than himself; she was also very well off, with an income of £4000 a year and a house in Grosvenor Gate. He had, moreover, declared that he never intended to marry for love, which he felt sure was a guarantee for infelicity, and that the marriages of all his friends who married for love or beauty turned out unhappily. Men often make such statements, and in the end act quite differently. It is certain that when Disraeli made up his mind to win her, his attitude towards her, judging by his acts and his letters, is very much that of a lover, and a sincere one. It was not all quite as fair sailing as the gossips would have us believe. When they were both in London he went to see her every day, and describes her talk as "that bright play of fancy and affection which welcomes me daily with such vivacious sweetness." He dislikes being separated from her: "My present feelings convince me of what I have ever believed, that there is no hell

on earth like separated love." His idea of love is the perpetual enjoyment of the loved one's society, and the sharing with her every thought and fancy and care; so long as they are together it does not matter where, "in heaven or on earth, or in the waters under the earth"; and although he declares he is not jealous, he confesses he envies the gentlemen about her—"When the eagle leaves you the vultures return." His affection grows in intensity, and he is sure that "health, his clear brain, and her love will enable him to conquer the world." At one period in the courtship, which seems to have lasted practically from the summer of 1838 to the autumn of 1839, there was a serious quarrel, and Mrs. Lewis desired him to quit her house for ever. Later, she seems to have reproached him with interested views, and he enters into a long explanation how, at the first, he had not been influenced by romantic feelings, that he wished for the solace of a home, and was not blind to the worldly advantage of an alliance with her, but all the same, if his heart had not been engaged he would not have proceeded in the matter. She forgave him, said it was all a mistake, that she had never desired him to quit the house or thought a word about money.

But Disraeli's letters to her express real affection, and of her devotion to him there can be no manner of doubt. She used to declare in later days, not quite seriously perhaps, "Dizzy married me for my money, but if he had the chance again he would marry me for love." Even Mrs. Bulwer, who at the time of the engagement gossiped freely of the kind and cherishing manner in which Dizzy behaved to Mrs. Lewis's £4000 a year, declared in later years that she had felt all along that Disraeli really cared for his wife, spoke of him as the most devoted husband, and asserted her conviction that had his wife lost all her possessions he would have continued equally kind to her. The wedding was celebrated at St. George's, Hanover Square, on 28th August 1839.

They went first to Tunbridge Wells and then to Germany. Mrs. Disraeli thought Baden-Baden not much better than Cheltenham, but was delighted with Munich. Even the glories of Paris, which they visited on the return journey, paled before the "features of splendour and tasteful invention" to be seen in Munich. By the end of November they were settled in Grosvenor Gate. The furniture and general arrangement of the house was ugly and bizarre.

Mrs. Disraeli lacked taste both in those matters and in her dress, which at all times was odd and strange, out of keeping with her age and the occasion. When she was eighty she would wear a bright crimson velvet tunic high to the throat, Disraeli's miniature fastened like an order on the left breast; at a great party at Stowe in 1845, when Queen Victoria was present, she wore black velvet, with hanging sleeves looped up with knots of blue and diamond buttons, the head-dress being blue velvet bows and buttons. She evidently had no eye for beauty, for she once said that she did not care in the least for looks in men, and would as soon have married a black man as not. Yet she had taste in landscape gardening, for the laying out of the woodland paths at Hughenden and the aspect of the whole of that portion of the grounds are due to her.

Disraeli expected great things from the marriage. The union was to seal his career: his wife was to console him in sorrow and disappointment, her "quick and accurate sense" to guide him in prosperity and triumph. All his hopes were fulfilled, in spite of great differences in their characters. Mrs. Disraeli had no ambition, hated politics in themselves, though

she devoted herself to her husband's career. She told Queen Victoria that she neither knew nor wished to know Cabinet secrets. Yet Disraeli liked to consult her, for although she was pleased to call herself a dunce, and never could remember whether the Greeks or Romans came first, and when there had been some talk about Swift was surprised to find she could not ask him to her parties because he had died a hundred years ago, she had great practical ability, good judgment, and quick intuition. Above all, she was always cheerful. She had absolute faith in her husband, and her geniality and warmth of feeling and kindness of heart endeared her to her friends, despite her utter want of tact and her propensity for saying gauche things. Some one once asked Mr. Disraeli if he did not get annoyed by the gauche things his wife so often said. He replied, "Oh no! I am never put out by them." "Well then," retorted his interlocutor, "you must be a man of most extraordinary qualities." "Not at all," answered Disraeli, "I only possess one quality in which most men are deficient—gratitude."

Many stories are told of Mrs. Disraeli's outspokenness and deficiency in tact.

When on a visit to a country house it hap-

pened that Lord Hardinge's room was next to the Disraelis', and the next morning Mrs. Disraeli said to Lord Hardinge at breakfast, "Oh, Lord Hardinge, I consider myself the most fortunate of women. I said to myself when I woke this morning, 'What a lucky woman I am! here I have been sleeping between the greatest orator and the greatest warrior of the day!'" Lady Hardinge, it was stated, did not look specially delighted. On the occasion of another visit it so happened that a former occupier of the house having possessed a number of fine paintings of the nude figure, the hostess had carefully removed from the walls all the pictures which she considered of doubtful propriety. One, however, had been overlooked and hung, as it chanced, in the room allotted to the Disraelis. Addressing her hostess, a lady of strictly puritanical views, Mrs. Disraeli said the first morning, "I find your house full of indecent pictures, there's a horrible one in our room: Disraeli says it is Venus and Adonis; I've been awake half the night trying to prevent him looking at it!" Again, when her host apologised for a dish having too much onion in it, she said, "I prefer them raw." At a concert at Buck-

ingham Palace she sat next to a lady whom she did not know, and talked much of her own married happiness, and then remarked, "But perhaps, my dear, you do not know what it is to have an affectionate husband."

She had little respect of persons and always spoke her mind. Soon after her marriage, she and Disraeli went to a luncheon-party given by Bulwer at Craven Cottage on the Thames. They arrived late, and found that the party had already gone with their host up the river in a steamer. Another late arrival was Louis Napoleon.[1] He said he would get a boat and row them to meet the others. His rowing, however, turned out to be of an amateurish character, and he only succeeded in rowing them on to a mudbank in the middle of the river. Help was fortunately procured, and a serious mishap narrowly avoided. Mrs. Disraeli rated Louis Napoleon roundly: "You should not undertake things you cannot accomplish," she told him. "You are always too adventurous." In 1856, when Mrs. Disraeli was dining at the Tuileries, she reminded the Emperor of the incident, and the Empress Eugénie, who overheard, said, "Just like him."

[1] Afterwards Emperor Napoleon III.

Disraeli was now, thanks to his wife, able to give dinner-parties. She understood such matters and took care that they should be brilliant and successful. With her husband she paid many visits to the Maxses at Woolbeding, and the Hopes at Deepdene, where the Christmas of 1840 was spent. Next year he contested Shrewsbury. His wife undoubtedly helped him to win the election, and she became most popular with the electors, who retained their admiration for her; Disraeli used to tell them that she was a perfect wife. She was always, on his visits to his constituents there, the heroine of the occasion, and he informs his sister that "M. A. (Mary Anne) got even more cheering than I did."

At the end of August 1841 Peel became Prime Minister, and Disraeli was full of hope that he would obtain office. Mrs. Disraeli was a great friend of Peel's sister, Mrs. George Dawson. But no call came, and on September 4 Mrs. Disraeli, without her husband's knowledge, wrote to Peel the famous letter in which she told him, "my husband's political career is for ever crushed if you do not appreciate him." She pointed out that Disraeli, for Peel's sake, had made personal enemies of Peel's opponents,

that he had stood four most expensive elections, in two of which he had gained seats from Whigs, and that he had abandoned literature for politics. "Do not destroy all his hopes, and make him feel his life has been a mistake." She then pointed out her own "humble but enthusiastic exertions" for the party, and how through her influence alone more than £40,000 had been spent at Maidstone. Disraeli also wrote himself appealing for recognition, but neither application was of any avail. After the brief autumn session the Disraelis went to Normandy, making Caen their headquarters. When Parliament met in February, Mrs. Disraeli was at Bradenham, and her husband wrote to her every day, recounting all that was going on.

From 1842 Disraeli was the recognised leader of the Tory party. In the autumn of 1842 they went to Paris, did some sight-seeing and met all the most distinguished people, French and English, in the capital from Louis-Philippe downwards. The next year in the recess Disraeli had a great reception at what his wife called "a grand literary meeting" at the Free Trade Hall at Manchester, with Charles Dickens in the chair. She accompanied her husband

everywhere; when some one asked Disraeli if he were going somewhere alone, that is, without the other Ministers, he replied, "No, Mary Anne is going. I cannot leave her quite in the lurch." She was always a great admirer of her husband's speeches and actions. In 1844 Disraeli himself presided at a similar meeting, and when an acquaintance in helping her on with her cloak one evening afterwards remarked on Disraeli's wonderful reception at Manchester, she began straightway to tell Disraeli's triumphs as if she were a girl of eighteen. On the visit to the Duke of Buckingham at Stowe in 1845, when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were the honoured guests, Mrs. Disraeli's greatest delight in the whole affair was that "Her Majesty had pointed Dizzy out, saying, '*There's Mr. Disraeli.*'" It was the first time Her Majesty had met Disraeli privately. Both he and his wife were much delighted with the attention they received during the visit.

The autumn holiday of 1845 was spent at Cassel in French Flanders, where they lived a simple rural life, getting up at 5.30 a.m. and going to bed at 9 p.m. Walking was their only exercise and chief amusement. Mrs. Disraeli reckoned that in two months she had walked

300 miles. It was in this year that *Sybil* was published. Disraeli dedicated the novel to his wife in the following terms :

"I would inscribe this book to one whose noble spirit and gentle nature ever prompt her to sympathise with the suffering ; to one whose sweet voice has often encouraged, and whose taste and judgment have ever guided, its pages ; the most severe of critics, but—a perfect wife ! "

Disraeli liked to consult his wife on points that arose in his work either political or literary, and would send up little notes to her asking her to come to the study and discuss them. He would also draw her into any conversation being carried on when she was present, and expected others to defer to her as he did.

Among her friends was Lady de Rothschild, wife of Sir Anthony de Rothschild, and her letters to Lady de Rothschild, some of which are here printed, well illustrate Mrs. Disraeli's warmth of heart in relation to her friends and her admiration of and devotion to her husband. It is usual to say that Mrs. Disraeli took no interest in politics. Undoubtedly politics in the abstract bored her, but in the political questions in which her husband was personally concerned she evinced the strongest interest,

and, as her letters prove, could comment on them with much shrewdness.

Mrs. Disraeli to Lady de Rothschild

"GROSVENOR GATE,
5th July [1845].

"One line, my dear Lady de Rothschild, to congratulate you and to express my happiness at the glorious result of Thursday's debate.[1] I am always wishing that you were here that we might talk it all over. Have I not for some time past assured you of all this?

"Yesterday we dined with the family circle[2] in Piccadilly. Such a happy party. I hear you have been to a gay Ball and that you are quite well. But your leave of absence must soon now be over, I hope. I have all sorts of things to tell you and only you. Parliament will be up the end of this month. The Thames does not appear to have injured Dizzy or any of the Members—they look remarkably well.[3]

"You will see much about Lady B. Lytton. Sir Edward told D. he had just missed a bad house. The abuse of him, we are told, is dreadful.

"Yesterday we went to Holland House—some new rooms and furnished beautifully.

[1] An allusion to the passing by the Commons of the Jews' Oaths of Abjuration Bill on 3rd July.

[2] Of the Rothschilds.

[3] An allusion to the Whitebait Dinner at Greenwich.

Numbers of people, but poor Lady Holland appeared very unwell. I cannot think how she can bear so much company."

"GROSVENOR GATE,
15*th January* 1847.

"On our return to Town last week our first visit was to you, and we were sadly disappointed to find you were not expected for some time. I hope it is pleasure that detains you, and that you are quite recovered from your late severe attack.

"Sir Anthony[1] took us all by surprise; no one ever expected to have seen his name in the *Gazette*. We drank your healths with the most affectionate pleasure, wishing every happiness to thee and thine, My Lady dear.

"We remained four months at Bradenham enjoying the most perfect seclusion and our usual long walks with four or five beautiful dogs.

"The first proofs of *Tancred* are now on the table. How much I wish you may be here when he is presented to the public, for I am sure you will sympathise with me on my child's fate. What an anxious, happy time for poor me the next six months' situation, and politics always for and against.

[1] Anthony de Rothschild had been created a Baronet at the New Year.

"Ask the Baroness James de Rothschild [1] to think of me, and kindly, now and then. Is she not the most perfect of women kind?

"How did the fire happen? [2] Do you not observe all the country houses are burnt down when the families are from home? I hope none of the beautiful china, etc., was there. My best love to your mother. I know she cares for thy precious self more than all the houses in the world, and you are now got quite well, and happy with the best husband in the world—except one—Dizzy, who is again to dine at New Court [3] with his best friend—to-morrow at Lord Stanhope's—the Protectionists 'feed well,' said Mr. Horace Twiss at Mr. Quintin Dick's. Another dinner on Thursday—last.

"It is not thought there will be a war, notwithstanding all the articles in the *Times* of yesterday and to-day.

"Lord Lincoln in his speech at Manchester declaring for the endowment of the Roman Catholics in Ireland, both his friends and foes say, will lose him his seat at the Election.

"It is thought Lord Dudley Stuart will stand for Westminster."

[1] Wife of Baron James de Rothschild, founder of the Rothschild firm in Paris.

[2] Worth Park, Sussex, the seat of Mrs. Montefiore, Lady de Rothschild's mother.

[3] The well-known business house of Messrs. Rothschild in the City of London.

"*23rd March* 1847.

"I cannot express to you my disappointment at not finding you at Baron Lionel's [1] on Sunday, having fully understood that you were arrived, or I should not have left home that day. They assure me that you will be here soon—but when? Do tell me that you are better—quite well. Your kind letter would have made me more happy had you given a better account of yourself. With so much kindness of feeling and being so much appreciated you must be suffering to remain so many months in retirement.

"I hope you will feel all the affection for our new child that I have for you. *Tancred* appears to be a greater favourite than *Coningsby*. Is not this a great triumph? The orthodox world have as yet made no hostile sign, but the journals have declared it brilliant. What will the *Times* say? I have suffered much anxiety."

Until the purchase of Hughenden Manor, which was concluded about this time with Mrs. Disraeli's money, Bradenham, the house of Disraeli's father, had been practically their country home. Mrs. Disraeli loved Hughenden; she laid out the grounds herself, and was never tired of making improvements. She made a

[1] The late Lord Rothschild.

good many alterations in the interior of the house, and the pretty woodland walks and the terraced gardens are wholly due to her. In 1862 she had twenty navvies working for her, making the terraces.

She made an admirable hostess, even if a somewhat despotic one, and her country-house parties were always greatly enjoyed. She took care that the dinner should be gay, even if she sent everybody to bed at 10.30 p.m. Her kind heart and genial manners made her guests blind to her oddities both of dress and talk.

In 1852 Disraeli became Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Derby. Mrs. Disraeli often drove her husband down to the House, but she would never go in and listen to the debates because she had made a vow that she would not do so until Disraeli was Prime Minister, a circumstance that did not happen until 1868.

She never went to bed until Disraeli returned from the House of Commons, and kept her own house fully lighted up—it was often 3 a.m. before he got home—so that it might present a welcoming appearance, and always took care that a hot supper was ready for him. He realised so well the feeling that prompted her action that after an important division in the House of

Commons[1] he refused an invitation to supper at the Carlton in order to carry the good news to his wife without delay. As she put it, "Dizzy came home to me!"

Mrs. Disraeli's consideration for her husband amounted to heroism. On one occasion, driving down to the House with him when he was going to make an important speech, on closing the door of the brougham when he got out, her hand was crushed in it. She made no sign, suppressing her suffering until Disraeli had disappeared within the doorway, when she called to the footman to release her. She knew how the knowledge that she had been hurt would have distracted his mind from his speech. On another occasion, on her way to Hatfield for a visit, Mrs. Disraeli had a fall and cut her face severely. Her husband was to arrive later, so when she reached the house Mrs. Disraeli told her hostess what had happened, saying, "My husband is preparing a great speech; if he finds out I have had an accident he will be quite upset. I want you to take me straight to my room and say I have a headache. He has lost his eyeglass, and if you put me a long way from him at dinner he will never see what a condition I am in."

[1] In 1867.

This was done, and Disraeli did not find out the state of the case until the day after the next day. But when he did he was so distressed that he asked permission for them to go home at once.

On the other hand, many stories are told of his devotion to her. When he received his D.C.L. at Oxford there was a great ovation. As he returned to his seat, he put up his eyeglass and sought his wife. He dropped it as soon as he saw her, and kissed his hand to her. He always wrote her a set of verses on the anniversary of their wedding day.

Her favourite topic of conversation was her husband, and she would descant on his merits and virtues in and out of season. She considered him handsome, and one evening when in the company of some ladies who began to talk about certain men who had fine figures, Mrs. Disraeli said in a tone of pity for those who could not possibly know what a fine figure of a man really meant, "Oh! you should see my Dizzy in his bath!" On another occasion after a dinner-party, one of the guests present took her to her carriage and said, "Mr. Disraeli spoke most eloquently in the House to-night; how well he is looking." Mrs. Disraeli, hugely delighted, replied, "Ah! you think he looks well—

you think him handsome, yet people call him ugly ; but he is not, *he is handsome* ; they should see him asleep."

In 1866 Mrs. Disraeli fell very ill, and her husband was much disturbed about her health. These later years have an element of pathos in them, for she was really suffering from an incurable cancer. She never told her husband, although of course he knew, and he did not let her guess that he knew, and took care throughout to conceal from her his great distress at her condition. In November 1867 she was dangerously ill, and in consequence the Opposition refrained from attacking the Government, and on the 19th Gladstone referred to her illness in the House of Commons. Mrs. Disraeli had a strong personal regard for Gladstone ; she could understand his great gifts and qualities.

Mrs. Disraeli was created a peeress in her own right on 30th November 1868. Queen Victoria wished to confer some mark of favour on Disraeli, and offered him a peerage, but he declined because he felt that he ought to remain in the House of Commons. The Queen, knowing his devotion to his wife, suggested that a peerage should be conferred on her instead, a mark of appreciation that delighted Disraeli. Not-

withstanding her illness, and at times the suffering was very great, Mrs. Disraeli went on with her usual life. She entertained a small party at Hughenden at the end of November 1872. The guests were Sir William Harcourt, Lord and Lady John Manners, and Lord Ronald Gower. Although she was sadly altered, indeed death was written in her face, and Disraeli was terribly depressed about her, she was gorgeously dressed, and on the Sunday afternoon accompanied the party on a walk, in her pony carriage, talking brightly about her pets—horses and peacocks. The next morning she came down after eleven o'clock, wonderfully brisk and lively after a bad night, and had her breakfast brought to the library where the others were sitting.[1] On 19th December she died at Hughenden, where she was buried.

Disraeli's grief was profound. He declared there never was a better wife. "She believed in me when men despised me. She relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted by the world." In his reply to Gladstone's note of sympathy, he said, "Marriage is the greatest earthly happiness when founded on complete sympathy; that hallowed lot was mine for a

[1] Cf. Lord Ronald Gower, *Reminiscences.*

moiety of existence."[1] He used to say how in thirty-three years of married life she had never given him a dull moment. To Gathorne Hardy he wrote: "To lose such a friend is to lose half one's existence."[2] The marriage had been the making of Disraeli, and he fully recognised the fact. Replying in 1867 to the toast of his wife's health, he had said:

"I do owe to that lady all, I think, that I have ever accomplished, because she has supported me by her counsel, and consoled me by the sweetness of her mind and disposition."

Another time he said of her:

"There was no care which she could not mitigate, and no difficulty which she could not face. She was the most cheerful and the most courageous woman I ever knew."

She brought Disraeli unclouded domestic happiness. She loved him and believed in him. Her oddities were more superficial than people thought, for although she was so voluble and so indiscreet a talker, and absolutely in her husband's confidence, she never betrayed it. She was no social leader as Lady Palmerston was; what influence she had was passive rather than active, yet without her single-minded devotion,

[1] 24th January 1873. [2] 9th January 1873.

it is doubtful if Disraeli would have had so great a career. To paraphrase his own words in *Coningsby* on marriage, he found in her one who gave him perfect and profound sympathy, could share his joys and often his sorrows, aid him in his projects, respond to his fancies, counsel him in his cares and support him in dangers, and "make life charming by her charms, interesting by her intelligence, and sweet by the vigilant variety of her tenderness."

Mrs. Dawson, wife of the Right Hon. George Dawson and sister of Sir Robert Peel, was one of Mrs. Disraeli's greatest friends. George Dawson wrote the following lines to accompany a reproduction of Mrs. Disraeli's portrait by A. E. Chalon, published in Heath's *Book of Beauty* (1841). They probably reflect what those who knew Mrs. Disraeli best felt with regard to her:

> "The choice unfetter'd fondly turns to thee:
> Still to thee turns, all-confident to find
> The features but the index of the mind,
> Glowing with truth, sincerity, and ease,
> Stamp'd with the surest attributes to please.
> Intelligent and gay, the joyous smile
> Speaking a bosom free from art or guile,
> Pure as the consciousness of well-spent life,
> Perfect as friend, as daughter, sister, wife."

VI

MRS. GLADSTONE

"Fate grants not passionless repose
To her who weds a glorious name."

I

CATHERINE, elder daughter and third child of Sir Stephen Glynne, eighth Baronet, by his wife, Mary Neville, daughter of the second Lord Braybrooke, was born at Hawarden Castle, Flintshire, on 6th January 1812. Lady Glynne was a granddaughter of George Grenville—Sir Richard Grenville of the *Revenge* was a member of this family—the Minister whose Government was responsible for the "Stamp Act" (1763), which led to the loss of the American Colonies, and niece of Lord Grenville, Prime Minister in 1806–7, and head of the Cabinet of "All the talents," which abolished the Slave Trade. His only sister became the wife of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and the mother of William Pitt, the Younger. Thus Catherine Glynne was related by birth with four famous Prime

MRS. GLADSTONE (ON THE LEFT) AND HER SISTER, LADY LYTTELTON,
ON THE LAWN AT HAWARDEN

Ministers of England, and was destined to become the wife of a fifth.

The families of both parents were of great antiquity, and directly descended from Crusaders; the names of Sir Stephen and Lady Glynne are on the Plantagenet Roll. Ancestors had been settled at Glynllifon, Carnarvonshire, in very ancient times. The founder of the Hawarden branch of the family, Sir John Glyn (1603–66), won distinction as a lawyer both under Cromwell—he was Lord Chief Justice from 1655 to 1659—and Charles II. Notwithstanding his support of the Parliamentary party, he seems to have been a Monarchist at heart and to have urged Cromwell to take the title of King; and we know that he served quite happily as King's Serjeant under Charles II., even acting for the Crown in the prosecution of Sir Henry Vane for high treason in 1662. It was through him that Hawarden came into the Glynne family, for he purchased it at a nominal sum when it was sequestered in the Civil Wars. The castle itself was nearly in ruins and was never rebuilt. In 1752 Sir John Glynne, Mrs. Gladstone's great-grandfather, acquired through marriage the adjoining property of Broad Lane, and the house belonging to it, with much rebuilding and various

additions, became the Hawarden Castle with which the name of Gladstone is always associated. The ruins of the old original castle still exist and form a picturesque object in the grounds.

Sir Stephen Glynne died in 1815, and the care of the four children, two boys and two girls, all under six years old, devolved on the mother. She returned to her father, and she and the children lived with him in Berkeley Square, at Audley End, and at Billingbere. It was only after his death that she resided at Hawarden, where she was assisted in the duties connected with the estate by her brother, the Rev. the Hon. George Neville, to whom her husband, shortly before his death, had presented the living of Hawarden.

A journal is still in existence in which Lady Glynne made notes about her children during the years 1815–20. She describes Catherine as beautiful, high-spirited, and strong-willed.

Catherine Glynne was not highly educated in the sense in which that phrase is now understood. As a girl, she lived more out of doors than indoors, became a good horsewoman and proficient in all the athletic exercises, archery among them, then permitted to girls. She was not a great reader then nor later, but contact

with the life of the village, the witnessing and even assisting in the schemes of improvement of her mother and uncle in regard to the cottagers and the education of their children, added to intercourse with people of intelligence in her own rank of life, taught her valuable lessons. Her training helped to lay the foundation of the excellent philanthropic work she accomplished on her own account after her marriage, and to develop the qualities which made her so admirable a companion for a great statesman. She could scarcely be called intellectual, but she possessed a natural intuition that never failed her, an equally natural shrewdness, and a keen sense of humour. Another quality that stood her in good stead was a capacity for making friends. One winter was spent at Hastings, and next door were staying Prince George of Cambridge and his cousin Prince George of Hanover. The young people speedily made acquaintance, and to the end of her life Mrs. Gladstone had no warmer friend and admirer than the Duke of Cambridge.

In 1829, when her daughters were about fifteen or sixteen, Lady Glynne took them to Paris for educational purposes, and, among other advantages, they enjoyed pianoforte lessons

from Liszt. The sisters were girls of singular beauty, and attracted much admiration. Lord Douglas was so impressed that he induced his mother, the Duchess of Hamilton, to call on Lady Glynne, and persuade her to let the girls go to two or three balls at the Tuileries, the British Embassy, and the Duchess of Hamilton's. Lady Glynne yielded, and the girls had a very enjoyable time.

Their brother Stephen, the head of the family, sat in the House of Commons as Liberal Member for Flint Burghs, and afterwards for Flintshire, from 1832 to 1847; his interests and tastes, however, lay rather in archæology than in politics. He was a man of great refinement and remarkable modesty, but he lacked the business capacity, as will be seen later, needed for managing landed estates. Among his friends at Oxford was W. E. Gladstone. The Glynnes, after the girls grew up, often went abroad, and once when Catherine was with her brother in Florence, they passed a gentleman who raised his hat. She asked Stephen who the handsome young man was. "Don't you know him?" he replied. "That is young Gladstone, the Member for Newark, and the man who everybody says will one day be Prime Minister of England." Catherine

was first introduced to Gladstone at the house of Mr. Milnes Gaskell in London, and then they used to meet at Lady Theresa Lister's musical parties and elsewhere. The two sisters were known as "the twin flowers of North Wales," were greatly admired in London society, and received numerous proposals of marriage. They were, however, bound up in each other, and were determined that one could not be engaged or married without the other. Gladstone admired Catherine in silence, scarcely dreaming that he dared aspire to her hand. In 1835 he was invited by Glynne to pay a visit to Hawarden. But still he did not venture to speak. In the winter of 1838–39 he was suffering from overwork, and was ordered abroad. He had been a junior Lord of the Treasury, and also Under-Secretary for War under Sir Robert Peel, and had published his book on Church and State, and so was not without claims to distinction. In Rome in December he met Stephen Glynne and his sisters, and there found courage to propose to Catherine one moonlight night in the Coliseum. He had repeated to her Byron's lines from "Manfred" beginning:

> "I do remember me, that in my youth,
> When I was wandering,—upon such a night
> I stood within the Coliseum's wall—"

Notwithstanding his eloquent appeal Miss Glynne refused him, and it was not until the following June at Lady Shelley's garden party that she accepted him. About the same time her sister Mary became engaged to the fourth Lord Lyttelton.

When the two bridegrooms arrived at Hawarden for the wedding, they walked down the village street, "Gladstone, tall and upright in figure, pale and strong in face, with dark flashing eyes like an eagle's; Lord Lyttelton, something of a rough and awkward youth of twenty-one, with rugged features, massive head, and intellectual brow; some one said, gazing at Gladstone, 'Isn't it easy to see which is the lord?'"

The double wedding took place on 25th July 1839, at Hawarden Parish Church, and was made the occasion for much festivity and rejoicing on the part of the family and their friends, and of the humble inhabitants of the district. Sir Francis Doyle was Gladstone's best man, and he wrote a poem for the occasion entitled "To Two Sister Brides," of which the following stanzas refer to Catherine:

"High hopes are thine, oh! eldest flower;
Great duties to be greatly done;
To soothe, in many a toil-worn hour,
The noble heart which thou hast won.

Covet not then the rest of those
  Who sleep through life unknown to fame;
Fate grants not passionless repose
  To her who weds a glorious name.

He presses on through calm and storm
  Unshaken, let what will betide;
Thou hast an office to perform,
  To be his answering spirit bride.

The path appointed for his feet
  Through desert wilds and rocks may go,
Where the eye looks in vain to greet
  The gales that from the waters blow.

Be thou a balmy breeze to him,
  A fountain singing at his side;
A star, whose light is never dim,
  A pillar, through the waste to guide."

Immediately after the ceremony Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone drove to Norton Priory, Cheshire, the seat of Sir Richard Brooke, whose daughter, Lady Brabazon, was the bride's best friend, where the honeymoon was spent.

Neither sister had been specially accustomed to the society of highly intellectual or bookish men, and during the engagement neither Gladstone nor Lord Lyttelton, as ardent lovers, had felt the necessity of resorting to the classics when in the company of their fiancées. The young brides, when comparing notes after the honeymoon, confided to one another their dismay that at odd spare moments both husbands

produced pocket editions of Horace or Sophocles (or some other classical poet), and filled the minutes by reading in them.

At the outset of their married life, Gladstone gave his wife the choice : either to know nothing of the great matters of State in which he would be involved and so be entirely free of responsibility, or to know everything and be bound to secrecy. Needless to say, she chose the latter. Fifty years later Gladstone declared, "My wife has known every political secret I have ever had, and has never betrayed my confidence." He became a Cabinet Minister in 1843 as President of the Board of Trade, and was six times Chancellor of the Exchequer and four times Prime Minister, so that his wife had ample opportunity for intimate acquaintance with State secrets, and for a corresponding exercise of discretion. It is related that once in the early days of Cabinet office she unwittingly said something that showed she had some important knowledge of a confidential nature. She was terribly upset and immediately sent Gladstone a little note of confession and penitence,—he was engaged at work in his study in Carlton House Terrace, where they were living,—to which her husband responded with ready forgiveness, saying,

" It is the only little mistake you ever made." Once she congratulated a man on his promotion before he knew anything about it himself, but no harm was done by that, and it only serves to prove how intimate was her knowledge of affairs. As a matter of fact, no one could ever extract anything from her, though many tried to do so. When she was asked what Gladstone was going to do in some crisis or other, she would answer with the greatest naïveté, " Well, I wonder, don't you ? What do you think he ought to do ? " Some undiscerning persons attributed her manner to stupidity, but Mrs. Gladstone always knew what she was doing and saying, and why she did and said it.

After the honeymoon, and a visit to Fasque, Kincardineshire (the home of Sir John Gladstone, where, so long as he lived, they spent some time each year), Gladstone and his wife when in London lived at 13 Carlton House Terrace, which he purchased in 1840. About six months after her marriage Mrs. Gladstone began to keep a fragmentary diary. Some extracts, printed here for the first time by kind permission of Mrs. Drew, form a record of her early married life, and illustrate her intelligent observation of the people around her, and her sense of humour.

"*April* 1840.—Dined at the Archbishop of York's, meeting the Queen Dowager, also the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Lady Harrington, etc. The Queen heard me speak of some one who was ill, and asked me all about it when we came upstairs. She beckoned to me to sit down by her. The Duchess of Cambridge very kind and talkative to me, speaking of our marriage at Hawarden, Mary's and mine, upon the same day, and the Queen joined in the conversation and also talked to William.

"I sat next to Guizot at Mr. Hallam's; he only made out my husband towards the end of dinner. He spoke English to me. We also met Mr. and Mrs. Grote (she is dreadful), the Bishop of London, George Lewis, Mrs. Austin, Dr.[1] and Mrs. Hawtrey.

"To a party at Buckingham Palace, arriving in time to see the Queen[2] enter the room. She does this more gracefully than I can possibly describe; it is quite a thing to see. Prince George of Cambridge talked to me. Lord Melbourne looked aged and careworn.

"At Northumberland House we met the Duke of Wellington—interesting to watch the people's manners with him. He went out of his way to speak to William."

[1] Headmaster of Eton.

[2] Queen Victoria.

The first baby, a boy, William Henry, was born on 3rd June 1840.

"*April* 1841.—Lord Lyndhurst[1] was on the platform at Twyford station. I saw him look at Baby, and the nurse said he noticed his intelligence, and having asked whose child he was, said, 'Will you ever be as clever a man as your papa?'

"Sir Robert Peel desired William to introduce me to him at Lady Jersey's; he talked of his daughter's approaching marriage to Lord Villiers.[2] He seemed in great force, which the events of the past few weeks would account for. Lady Peel said to William, 'Has not he done it well? It is very soon after the want of confidence motion and the majority of one.' The Duke of Cambridge was very loquacious, but I was not a little relieved at his fastening upon William.

"I sat next the Duke of Wellington at the Archbishop of York's dinner, but I had his deaf ear; yet I was pleased to think he had spoken to me before either of us died—have long wished for this."

"*September* 21, 1841.—Dinner-party at home. The future Bishop of New Zealand was with us; his conversation was very interesting as to his going to New Zealand, very touching the way he spoke

[1] The Lord Chancellor.

[2] See p. 56.

of his wife : ' She feels just as I could most wish ; she has all the tenderness of a woman joined to the greatest firmness and resolution.' I was present at his Consecration at Lambeth Chapel, that fine touching service never to be heard without emotion, but in the present instance how peculiarly affecting. He was leaving his native land and all that he held most dear. I believe there was scarcely one dry eye. May I be the better for this day !

"William and I visited the Bishop at his house at Eton, so as to be present at the farewell dinner given by Mr. Coleridge the day before his farewell sermon at Windsor. There were forty present. I sat between Judge Patterson and Dr. Hawtrey. Afterwards Mr. Coleridge proposed the health of the Bishop in a touching speech, for which the Bishop returned thanks. Devoted to the service of his God, he is able to feel the step he has taken not as a sacrifice but as a privilege; he unites unusual tenderness of feeling to great manliness of character. The scene was an extraordinary one. Casting the eye down a long dinner-table, most of the guests were in tears, men and women sobbing, poor old Dr. Keate (to-day was my first introduction to him), his head upon the table, his face buried in his pocket-handkerchief.[1] I never witnessed

[1] A picture showing an unusual side of the stern disciplinarian. He was sixty-eight.

such devotion. His sermon (*i.e.* the Bishop's) the following day was striking and affecting; a crowded congregation, there was not even standing room. Evidently he is not allowing himself to have any idea of returning to live in England."

"*December* 20, 1841.—I find London very empty. William is absent from twelve to seven in the daytime,[1] and works hard all the time he is at home, but I am greatly relieved to be with him again, though it is a little dreary sometimes in the day. I have been reading Hook's *Sermons*, and I have finished *Ten Thousand a Year*,[2] which, although vulgar, is clever and interesting. I sat an hour at his office at the Board of Trade.

"*January* 1, 1842.—A new year is always an awful thing. God give me grace to become better in the future! I feel acutely how little good I do—but to feel is not enough.

"*January* 6.—I am thirty to-day—a terrible thought. We had a dinner-party for Mr. Grenville (Uncle Tom).[3] He sat nearly an hour with me in the afternoon. As he walked from Hamilton Place and back this was pretty well for eighty-seven.

[1] Mr. Gladstone was Vice-President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint.

[2] By Samuel Warren.

[3] The Right Hon. Thomas Grenville (1755–1846), politician and book collector. His bequest of books to the British Museum forms the Grenville Library.

"*January* 17.—William dined in the city to meet Prince Albert. Peel spoke well, and the Prince was evidently affected in alluding to his dear ties which bind him to England. Elizabeth Fry sat between the Prince and Sir Robert Peel.

"*January* 20.—William dined at Putney with Lord and Lady Ripon. He liked her extremely, and she was particularly thoughtful in wishing me to come there for country air.

"*January* 22.—Dined with the Barings to meet Lord and Lady Stanley, Lady Granville, etc., Lord Stanley [1] taking me in to dinner. I was very shy, he was in great spirits, full of fun and jokes. At all events *he* can shake off the cares of office. I was interested, but relieved when we went upstairs, where I got on with both the ladies well.

"*January* 24.—George, the page, did not know what event we celebrated on Christmas Day! I hope he will come on, but it is sad, as he is near fifteen.

"*January* 29.—To-day William met the King of Prussia [2] at Bunsen's. H.M. recognised him, and said he wished to have some conversation with him about his book. Lady Canning was the only lady except the hostess. A queer

[1] Minister for War and the Colonies. Afterwards Lord Derby, and Prime Minister in 1852, 1858, and 1866.

[2] Frederick William IV.

medley of people—clergymen, Quakers, scientific men. I dined at Mrs. Grenville's, meeting the Duchess of Sutherland,[1] Lord and Lady Mahon, Mr. Harcourt, and Mr. Samuel Rogers. Pleased with both Duke and Duchess; she spoke so nicely and naturally about nursing her babies.

"*January* 31.—We dined at the Duchess of Beaufort's alone, and to Stafford House[2] afterwards. Never so struck by that splendid house, specially the staircase, where a band was playing. Saw the King of Prussia; a strong likeness to O'Connell, with an ingenuous countenance.

"*February* 1.—At the Duke of Wellington's to meet the King of Prussia—the first time I had been to Apsley House—which gave me great pleasure; he sat near the pianoforte listening to the music, apparently lost to everything besides.

"*February* 5.—William told me something of great interest; he was harassed, and we were glad to escape quietly to pass our evening alone.

"*February* 6.—At St. Martin's and St. James's Churches. Before the end of the day

[1] With whom Mrs. Gladstone soon formed a lasting friendship.

[2] The Duke of Sutherland's London house, now the London Museum.

William a different being, and his appetite returned.

"*Sunday, February* 13.—A note from Sir Robert Peel desiring William to follow Lord John Russell in the House on Monday. He made no preparation to-day.

"*February* 14.—This has been a happy chance which fixed my night at the House of Commons for his speech. Lady Stanley was in the next division. I found myself nearly upon Lady John Russell's lap—with Lady Palmerston and some other wives near; funny, we began talking, though before unacquainted, and I told her my husband was to answer hers, which news she received with the greatest interest. She said her heart was beating, and she was all attention when Lord John began. He spoke for an hour and a half with eloquence and cleverness, but he made one slip, which William made much of in a speech which lasted two hours. It was quite pain to me before he got up, but before he had said many words, there was something at once so spirited, so collected, in his manner that all fright was lost in intense interest and delight. Pride is not perhaps the right feeling; great thankfulness was, however, mixed up with it. We heard him very well; he was rapid, and without the smallest hesitation throughout. Peel was evidently much delighted,

and from all I gather this speech has made a very great sensation. We had coffee in our room—how snug I need hardly describe, indeed I could not.

"*March* 2.—Went to Lady Peel's. I was struck by Sir Robert's cordiality for William's sake, and never had more satisfactory things said of him than from Mrs. Dawson, Peel's sister. A very popular party with all kinds. M.P.'s wives make obeisance to Lady Peel, which was fun to watch."

In view of the philanthropic work Mrs. Gladstone was to do later, the following entry is of interest:

"*March* 3.—Lord de Tabley drove me in his cabriolet to the Mendicity Society, where we spent a long time. Most interesting to hear the examination of the numberless cases of poverty, and to see the quickness and the knowledge of the interrogators. I could have wished to see less asperity and suspicion in their manner. Alas! that such glaring and constant imposition should cause this, as I believe that a certain degree of severity is necessary. Out of thirty cases only one, in all likelihood, will turn out true.

"*March* 19.—Dined with Lord and Lady Stanley. Lady Stanley very nice and looking

better than I have seen her. After dinner Lord Stanley came and sat by me and was particularly agreeable. I found I lost my awe of him, he was so easy and pleasant. The conversation took the turn of an official life, and he questioned me about William. He said that he had the chief brunt of the work now. Lord Stanley has cold chicken and weak wine and water late at night, and is very apt to sit, while eating it, with his feet in hot water, specially if excited or after speaking. Then he takes a suitable novel for half an hour, which composes him to sleep. When Chief Secretary for Ireland, he worked eighteen hours a day. He maintains that with mental work there is no need for bodily exercise, which accordingly he never takes now. He prides himself upon twenty years' experience. This may be all very well, but the truth is his health is particularly good. He went off afterwards on the various tricks in speaking. He took off Peel, who, he says, is very nervous at times. He could not remember any trick of William's. He was full of interesting anecdotes. A few days ago at Peel's some one was placed by the Duke of Wellington, who gave an elaborate account of things relating to India. The Duke sat in his armchair, his chin upon his chest, listening with occasional grunts. The man having gone on—on, the Duke suddenly

came out in the quietest manner with, 'I've been in India.' Stanley told it very well."

Mrs. Gladstone was present at the Queen's fancy dress ball at Buckingham Palace on 12th May. She went as Claude, wife of Francis I. of France, and wore a deep red petticoat opening in front, large sleeves of gold tissue and a crimson cap. She found the ball a striking and amusing sight.

At a dinner-party at Lord Ripon's in July, Peel took Mrs. Gladstone in to dinner. She was glad of this because it enabled her to thank him for the letter[1] he had written to her father-in-law about Gladstone. In it Peel said: "At no time in the annals of Parliament has there been exhibited a more admirable combination of ability, extensive knowledge, temper, and discretion. Your feelings must be gratified in the highest degree by the success which has naturally and justly followed his intellectual exertions, and that the capacity to make such exertions is combined in his case with such purity of heart and integrity of spirit."

Mrs. Gladstone gives the following interesting account of Peel's talk at dinner:

"He was in great force, some of the con-

[1] 16th June 1842.

versation very interesting. He had seen a letter written by the Duke of Wellington soon after entering the army, in which he expressed the hope that he should be taken out of the army, as there seemed to be no chance of any promotion!!

"Peel told me he required very little sleep, that he was a light sleeper at any time, and got but a small portion when his mind was occupied. He still regretted the political power which some had, the Duke of Wellington for instance."

Mrs. Gladstone in these years saw something of the Royal children, as their governess, Sarah, Lady Lyttelton,[1] was the mother-in-law of her sister Mary. The following visits to the Palace are recorded in the Journal:

"*July*, 1842.—Went to see Lady Lyttelton and the Royal children. The Princess[2] is a very interesting child, no longer answering to Mary's[3] description, 'a sadly delicate thing.' She is the image of the Queen. I played on the pianoforte, which delighted her, she tried to dance, and when I stopped called for 'more.'

[1] She was appointed to the office in 1842, and held it until 1851.

[2] The Princess Royal, afterwards Empress Frederick of Germany.

[3] Her sister, Lady Lyttelton.

The Prince of Wales a fine, fair, satisfactory baby, whom William and I gazed upon with deep interest. We kissed his little hand. Who could look at him and think of his destiny without mixed emotion ? "

" *March* 8, 1844.—Took Willie and Agnes [1] to Buckingham Palace by desire of the Queen. Lady Lyttelton received us, and we took off the children's things before going in to H.M. She shook hands very kindly and desired me to sit down by her. The three Royal children were with her. Princess Alice a nice fat baby, thoroughly good humoured and benevolent. Princess Royal about a head shorter than Willie, very engaging, not exactly pretty but like the Queen and Prince Albert. The Prince of Wales small, and the head not striking me as well shaped, his long trousers tied below the ankles and very full, most unbecoming. His manners very dear and not shy. They are evidently quite unspoilt, and I observed the Queen made them obey her. Princess Royal and Willie kissed each other, and she patronised little Agnes who stood by her and the Prince, quite at home and nearly as tall as the Prince, so much so as to make the Queen observe, ' The Prince *is* the tallest of the two ' (he was a year older). I was much relieved at my children being so good and doing no harm.

[1] Born 18th October 1842. Afterwards Mrs. Wickham.

The Queen observed, 'What care Willie takes of Agnes,' admired his hair and his width. Agnes's independence amused her, and she was in fits of laughter occasionally at her. Before leaving the Queen kissed both my children."

"*January* 30, 1846.—Dined at the Palace; the Queen ill dressed; very kind to us, talking much of Mary's children and my own. The Queen has ordered me to bring my children to her on Saturday.

"I accordingly took the four, Willie, Agnes, Stephen,[1] and Jessy.[2] H.M. came in with her four, and was very nice and kind. Princess Royal a nice quiet thing, not so much difference in the heights as last time. Prince of Wales has a striking countenance, Alfred very pretty, all have such fat white necks. Prince Alfred is a year and a half old, Stephen head and shoulders taller at a year and ten months. The Queen commented on Agnes's looks: 'I had not heard about her being so very pretty.' Thought Willie pale and Stephen gigantic, baby fat and like her father. She took great notice of them all, kissed Agnes and gave them a huge lamb between them all, which the Royal children and ours played with very happily during the visit. The Queen spoke of their goodness, asked if they were always so good."

[1] Born 1844. [2] Born 1845.

We must now return to 1842. In September, at Hawarden, Gladstone met with the shooting accident that caused the loss of the forefinger of his left hand. Except for that no harm was done, and Mrs. Gladstone records her husband's calmness and cheerfulness, "only thankful for his escape and thinking how he could make the best of it for me. He only seemed to think of others, evincing the greatest coolness and presence of mind, quietly submitting to the operation, which lasted five minutes. It gave him terrible pain, which he bore with unflinching courage." There were really two operations, but this was kept from his wife, who was expecting her confinement in a month. The surgeon found he had made the cut in the wrong place and had to do it all over again. As the days of chloroform had not yet dawned, the acutest agony was endured. All went well, and in a few days Gladstone was able to play chess and whist without inconvenience.

On 18th October Mrs. Gladstone drove in the park with her husband, and at 8 p.m. her little girl (Agnes) was born, "a fine healthy baby with pretty features, complexion nice and clear, never red."

Christmas was spent at Hawarden.

"*December* 29.—My dear William's birthday. God bless him! How every day that passes more and more impresses me with the treasure I am blessed with, but alas! how very far I am behind him.

"*January* 6, 1843.—Thirty-one to-day. Time passes so quickly, and in reviewing the past year how little I have done. May God enable me to act upon the resolutions I have formed.

"*January* 7.—Most people struck by baby's beauty, the eyes particularly large and fine and very expressive, dark blue in colour, the sweetest thing that ever was.

"*January* 30.—We all left dear Hawarden, a party of seventeen, including the Lytteltons and mama, besides children. Willie a very fatiguing traveller, Agnes excellent. William [1] met us at the station, all well. Whirled by the bustle of London and the contrast of Hawarden.

"*March* 3.—Engaged a cook after a long conversation about religious matters, chiefly between her and William. She interested me greatly.

"*March* 6.—To Mr. Richmond with my boy, he finds him difficult to paint and varying in expression.

"Dined with Samuel Rogers. Archbishop

[1] He had gone to London on the 16th.

of Canterbury, Bishop of London and Mrs. Blomfield, Wordsworth, Lord Glenelg, and others. Mr. Rogers whispered to me that he was much impressed at having the heads of the Church to dine with him. I never saw him so little at ease.

"*March* 17.—We dined at the Palace. Clanwilliams, Lord Palmerston, Lord Rosebery, Lord Jersey. Lord Sydney took me in. After dinner the Queen asked me about William's accident and the children and Mary. She has a good deal of expression when speaking, more than I had thought. Was surprised to find it so little formal, really enjoyed my evening."

Mrs. Gladstone was piling up experiences of many kinds. She was learning the cares and pleasures of motherhood; she had become familiar with the life of palaces and of political centres. She also gained some acquaintance with a more sordid side of existence. One of her housemaids had to be prosecuted for theft; Mrs. Gladstone had to spend two mornings at Bow Street and to attend the trial. "Having with the policeman, the searcher, and the pawnbroker sworn to speak the truth, the whole truth, I went into the box. I felt very shy; they would not admit William with me. To find myself

there gave quite a new view of life." Mrs. Gladstone visited the girl at Newgate and at the Penitentiary.

In 1843 Gladstone first became a Cabinet Minister.

"*May* 13, 1843.—A letter from Sir Robert Peel offering William a seat in the Cabinet, to succeed Lord Ripon as President of the Board of Trade. He went to Peel, having taken a short time for consideration, and came back to tell me there was a hitch, because of the Church question. I walked with him in Kensington Gardens. He was oppressed by the great anxiety to act rightly, he asked me to pray for him. How thankful I am to be joined to one whose mind is purity and integrity itself. If I have received joy in reading Peel's letter, how much more ought I to feel in seeing the way he received it, in witnessing that tenderness of conscience which shrinks at the bare idea of any worldly gain lest it should in any way interfere with higher duties.

"*May* 15.—A consultation with Hope and Manning of some length. They persuaded him to go himself to Peel. He has accepted; God bless and prosper him in his new office. He has been very happy in his former place. May the increase of responsibility not injure his precious health. How I wish he could have a horse!"

In August Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone and the children went to Fasque on a visit to his father. From Glasgow to Fasque she travelled on the outside of the mail coach, a twelve hours' drive, her first experience of such a mode of journeying, enjoying it immensely. When returning in October, prevented by bad weather from going by sea as they had intended from Dundee to London, they caught the midnight mail from Perth. Only one inside place was available, so Mrs. Gladstone elected to mount to the top with her husband, and so travelled all night, "cold and blowing a high wind."

Some of the entries in the Journal for 1844 show that Mrs. Gladstone's mind was turning towards the distress in London which, later on, she was to do so much to relieve. At dinner in March with the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, her host talked to her of the misery existing in London, and she thought his conversation showed the interest and pains he took. At this period she often went to the House of Commons, and one night heard Shiel, "his style fluent and brilliant, but ranting, and the voice peculiarly discordant and unpleasant"; and on another, Lord Ashley on the Factory question.

On 4th April her son Stephen was born, "a plain baby, small eyes," but a few months later she notes, "baby greatly improved." In June she was present at a party at Buckingham Palace given for the Emperor of Russia,[1] "a grand-looking personage, his figure so striking, tall, and commanding, his manner remarkable, so very civil and courteous, friendly without losing his dignity. The form and manner struck me more than the face itself. But he has an expression that seems to look straight through one, something peculiarly awful in the eyes. The profile, however, is good, and combined with the figure there is something grand and noble. It was interesting to watch him and the Duke of Wellington talking together. When the Queen and the Emperor had finished with refreshments, the manner in which she took his arm, and his in giving it to her, was striking and graceful beyond description; the great inequality of their heights would never have been suspected, such was the grace and ease with which they walked off together."

Mrs. Gladstone thoroughly enjoyed the continual meetings with interesting persons; she liked listening to the conversation of such men

[1] Nicholas I.

as Peel and Brougham, and was hugely delighted when after a concert at the Palace the Duke of Wellington insisted on escorting her husband and herself to their carriage. "I was fearful lest he should catch cold, there was such a draught; he merely placed his cocked hat upon his head. How characteristic is all he says, and the honesty and peculiar straightforwardness of his character."

On 27th July 1845 a second daughter was born, Catherine Jessy, "a nice fat thing, with famous lungs to judge by her voice, the mouth so small with short upper lip, the hair darkish, very placid, and takes much notice for her age."

There were some interesting dinners at Sir Robert Peel's. One in March 1848 she thus describes:

"Anxiety and sorrow sat on many of the countenances assembled. There stood Guizot, with that piercing eye of fire, his whole appearance eagle-like, his countenance beaming with sagacity and a great intellect, in earnest conversation with Peel, full of gesture, and now and then his voice raised, as if bursting with feeling that would out. There were the poor Jarnacs, with full marks of sorrow for their King and Queen! The Princess Lieven; the Austrian

Ambassador harassed afresh with the increasing troubles in Austria which so afflicted his wife as to make it impossible for her to be present. The party was relieved by Lord Aberdeen, Lord and Lady Mahon. I had some talk with Madame Jarnac. Her account of the poor Queen of France especially was touching, of the dangers and trials connected with their flight, of the sad deprivations to which they were subject, the terror of the poor Queen about her husband and then her children. Sir Robert Peel joined in our conversation; he views the state of Europe with much alarm. He had received private information respecting the Prince of Prussia (now at Bunsen's), who is said to have broken his sword, and laid it with his spurs at the feet of the King of Prussia. Lady Peel looks so wonderfully young and pretty. I returned home excited with the evening we had passed with that remarkable party."

Next year (1849) dining again at Sir Robert Peel's, Peel talked to her after dinner. "I confess I had never known him so well before, for now his conversation turned on subjects which specially brought out feeling, his children and their education, Lady Lincoln, Mr. Goulburn's trials and excellences. Speaking of his

children he enlarged upon the satisfaction of having no permanent governess, liked his girls to travel with him, said it enlarged their minds, and a good deal more, showing that amidst all his great cares the domestic element was very near his heart."

Two more daughters were born, Mary, in 1847, and Helen in 1849. The first sorrow of their married life occurred in 1850, when on 9th April their little girl Catherine Jessy (born 1845) died of meningitis after a long and painful illness. In her Journal Mrs. Gladstone writes :

" Yes, to look at her face after death was a privilege. I dread lest the solemn remembrance of her loved face should in any way fade, so holy it was.

" My loved child, my own Jessy, to think that the quiet countenance in its deep repose is the same which but a few hours before seemed racked with pain. The hair waved softly on the marble forehead, the dark lashes fringing her cheeks, the little white hands folded across one another. We had placed roses and lilies of the valley about her. I could not describe the sublimity of her expression."

In 1850, after the death of their second daughter, Catherine, Gladstone took his wife to

Brighton to recruit, and although Mrs. Gladstone looked worn and found it difficult to join in general conversation, she felt as if a great calm had set in "after the storms before."

Two more sons were born, Henry Neville in 1852, and Herbert John[1] in 1854. Thus between 1840 and 1854 Mrs. Gladstone became the mother of eight children, seven of whom survived. While never neglecting her duties as a mother, from the first she studied her husband and sought to secure him the quiet at home which he needed during the Parliamentary Session. He used to say to her, "It is always relief and always delight to see and to be with you." Her sister Lady Lyttelton gave him the same sense of restfulness; the two sisters were as united after marriage as they had been before, and their close association was only broken by Lady Lyttelton's death in 1857. Gladstone wrote at the time: "They so drew from their very earliest years and not less since marriage than before it, their breath, so to speak, in common." Lady Lyttelton left twelve children, and Mrs. Gladstone, despite the cares of her own family, and the rest of her various pre-occupations, never ceased to look

[1] Now Lord Gladstone.

after these children as long as they needed her.

Mr. Gladstone was the soul of method, neatness, and punctuality; the girl he had married was exactly the reverse, and she used to tease her husband and tell him it was good for him to have an untidy, unmethodical wife, it made him more human. Many stories are told of her delinquencies. It is said that on one occasion when cards of invitation were being sent out for a great party, certain letters of the alphabet were mislaid and ultimately found after the party, hidden in the interstices of a sofa into which they had fallen. The deep offence of those persons who had received no invitation may be better imagined than described. Most of us have known the queer experience of the sudden disappearance of a pencil case or a pair of scissors, when sitting on a chair or sofa of a certain type of upholstery.

When Mrs. Gladstone was beginning philanthropic work and had charge of money connected with it, her husband told her that she must have a cash box to keep it in, and must take great care of the key. One day she triumphantly showed him the box with the key carefully fastened on to it! But be it said

that where such casual ways would have been harmful to her husband's interests, she was able to overcome them.

She managed all the details of their daily life; the meals were punctually served, the carriage at the door to the moment. Mr. Gladstone was never, through her instrumentality, kept waiting for anything. She contrived with what almost amounted to genius to have a hot dinner consisting of suitable food ready at any time between eight and twelve o'clock that Mr. Gladstone might come home from the House. It was always she who made the arrangements for journeys; she looked after all the details of, and carefully guarded him from, the tiresome inconveniences and annoyances inseparable from travel. She used laughingly to tell him that while he, no doubt, could govern the country admirably, arrangements for a railway journey were better left to her. She accompanied him to the House of Commons whenever he had an important speech to make, and from the Speaker's little gallery listened to every word and watched every gesture. She herself mixed the egg-flip with which Mr. Gladstone provided himself when his voice was to undergo a prolonged strain. In 1847, when she can-

vassed for her husband at Oxford, she was described as a "potent canvasser." At Newcastle in 1862 she told a friend that it had been the happiest day of her life, while her husband averred: "Catherine is a great part of the whole business everywhere," and twenty years later she said, "I shall never forget that day! It was the first time that he was received as he deserved to be."

Sometimes she would herself receive his callers on business and usher them into the library. Indeed, she shielded him from all the cares and worries that it was possible for her to take on herself. She looked after his health, and in her powers as physician Gladstone had an intense confidence. He often consulted his wife when there were difficulties between Ministers, and averred that her mother-wit often hit on a solution. Even in comparatively small matters she sought to save him physical fatigue. Every one who has held any kind of public office knows the pain incurred in shaking hands with hundreds of people. Mr. Gladstone used to stiffen his hand and to place his thumb against the palm so that people could not grasp it, but even so when his wife thought he had gone through enough fatigue of the kind, standing close behind him she would thrust her

hand forward in place of his, and no one noticed the exchange.

She accompanied Gladstone on all his political campaigns, on all his recreative travels. When in 1891 he went into residence at All Souls', Oxford, for a week, she invited herself to stay with Sir Henry Acland, and her husband was in and out of the house as often as he wished.

Sir Stephen Glynne's taste for the study of ecclesiastical architecture[1] led him to rely on others for the management of his estates, and in 1851 it was discovered that their financial condition was in so bad a way, that it was feared Sir Stephen would have to leave Hawarden. Mr. Gladstone had just inherited a large sum of money from his father, and he devoted a portion of it to clearing off the debts that through the indiscretions of an agent, left too much to his own devices, encumbered the Hawarden estates. It was then arranged that Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone and their young family should regard Hawarden as their country home, Sir Stephen Glynne still continuing to live there. He died suddenly in 1874; he was unmarried, and as his brother Henry, who died in 1872, left no male

[1] He visited and made notes concerning 5530 churches in England and Wales. *Notes on the Churches of Kent*, by Sir Stephen Glynne, Bart., 1877.

issue, it had been settled by will that the estates should pass to the eldest surviving son of his eldest sister, but that Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone were to have the use and enjoyment of Hawarden Castle and grounds for their lives. Thus Mr. William Henry Gladstone became the heir to the property, which descended on his death in 1891 to his eldest son, the late William Glynne Charles Gladstone. But Hawarden continued to their death to be the country home of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone and their children.

Mrs. Gladstone was devoted to the gardens and park of Hawarden, and was sometimes seriously concerned for the trees that it was her husband's recreation to cut down, and would earnestly plead for them. But it should be stated that Mr. Gladstone knew what he was doing, and his knowledge of forestry only made for the improvement of the estate and for the better health of the trees left standing.

II

Although the greater part of Mrs. Gladstone's time was given to the care of her husband and of her children, and to the social duties entailed by her position, she found sufficient leisure during the period we have traversed to initiate

and carry through philanthropic work of an important and useful kind, involving a large amount of actual personal service.

She began by visiting the House of Charity in Soho, founded in 1846, to provide shelter for a few of those persons, not of the ordinary vagrant class, who through misfortune or ill-health had become homeless wanderers, but could not bring themselves to ask for poor-law relief, and indeed for many reasons would not have been received into the casual wards of the workhouses. Mrs. Gladstone soon saw that something further was needed. Throughout her life she was a most successful beggar. She raised the sum of £1200 among her friends, rented some disused slaughter-houses in Newport Market, made the necessary alterations, and early in 1864 the place was opened as a Night Refuge. In October a woman's ward was added. All this was done mainly through Mrs. Gladstone's exertions. The interest of the public was thereby aroused in the question of casual relief, and the passing of the Houseless Poor Act[1] was the direct result. At the end of 1865 it was stated by the authorities that there was far less misery and distress about the streets of London

[1] 29th July 1864.

than was the case before the Act came into force. The Newport Market Refuge, as it was called, did admirable work. A Boys' Industrial School was also soon established there—for many of the casuals were friendless, little, half-starved, half-naked boys between the ages of five and twelve.

Mrs. Gladstone not only wrote appeals for funds and enlisted the sympathy of the *Times*, but regularly visited the Refuge and the School, and used to make excellent little speeches to the boys, full of kindness and admirable advice. In 1882 the old buildings were condemned, and after temporary housing in Long Acre, the Refuge and School went into a building of its own in what is now Greencoat Place, Westminster. The Refuge ceased to exist after 1905, but the Boys' School is still carried on as the Newport Market Army Training School, and does excellent work.

There were many other sides to Mrs. Gladstone's philanthropic work. She was a constant visitor to the London Hospital in Whitechapel, and when cholera broke out in 1866, instead of seeking to avoid infection and the distressing sights of a large hospital at the time of an epidemic, she only redoubled her zeal. She

was indeed one of the very first to face all the difficulties when most people were panic-stricken for fear of infection. She moved freely about the wards among the patients, speaking kindly words of comfort and encouragement. She saw that one great necessity was a place to which convalescent patients, especially children, could be sent, and she made a public appeal for funds wherewith to provide such accommodation. Mainly through her instrumentality and exertions a sum of £70,000 was soon subscribed. Convalescent homes are now regarded as indispensable, and their existence taken as a matter of course, but Mrs. Gladstone's share in promoting the good work that led to that result can scarcely be overrated. It is said that in the beginning a few of the convalescent children wrapped in blankets were received in an attic in Downing Street until suitable shelter could be provided. The Home was established first at Snaresbrook, and then removed to Woodford, on the borders of Epping Forest, as "Mrs. Gladstone's Free Convalescent Home for the poor, more especially of the east of London." In considering the history of such institutions, it must be remembered that it was Mrs. Gladstone who initiated the system of

giving the subscribers no privileges either in admitting patients or in the management of the Home. The money was handed over to the Committee who were responsible for everything, and applications for admission were made as simple as possible. Mrs. Gladstone herself attended the meetings of the Convalescent Home Selection Committee at the London Hospital, and made patient and sympathetic inquiries of the applicants. She also on those occasions, as far as her time allowed, visited the wards and showed her interest in patients and nurses. And she often paid the patients at Woodford Hall visits which were a source of intense pleasure. She had the gift when talking to them of conveying her real personal interest in them each individually, and they felt no shyness in her society. Sometimes she would sit down at the piano and play dance music for them; they generally chose country dances like Sir Roger de Coverley in which the older people could join, and a very merry time they had. Her visits ceased in 1894, but her interest never flagged. During the last weeks of Mr. Gladstone's illness, a letter of application to her from a girl who wished to be received into the Home was put aside and forgotten. When Mrs.

Gladstone came across it she was terribly concerned lest her inadvertence, which any one would have excused at such a time,[1] had caused a delay that should have done the girl any hurt. Happily it was not too late for her admission. It may be stated that 33,000 patients were admitted to the Home down to the end of 1897. It was removed to Mitcham, Surrey, in 1900.

It should be remembered that in the years when Mrs. Gladstone was most active in her ministrations there were no motor-cars, and indeed no quick and convenient communication between the west end of London and the Whitechapel Road, and it is marvellous how she found time to do all she did. She mostly went down to Whitechapel by omnibus and train, travelling third class. On one occasion there was a lady in the train with whom Mrs. Gladstone entered into conversation and who confided her troubles. It seemed her husband had an appointment in Australia, but she could not accompany him as they had not money enough to pay the passage for both. In talking Mrs. Gladstone passed the station at which she should have got out, and on looking in her purse found she had no money, having expended

[1] Mr. Gladstone died three weeks after the letter was received.

what she had on her return ticket. Thereupon she borrowed some from the lady, giving her name and address, and told her if she would call next day she would in the meanwhile see what could be done to help her. When the lady told her husband of the adventure, he said, "Well, you must be green. As if Mrs. Gladstone would travel third class and be without any money!" He insisted on accompanying his wife next day, fearing some hoax. To his surprise she was let in to the house, and he walked up and down till she came out in a great state of joy. Mrs. Gladstone had been at a dinner-party the night before and had collected £70, a sum she had just handed to her for her journey!

But Mrs. Gladstone's charities were not confined to the east end of London. She established an orphanage and an asylum for aged women at Hawarden, and during the distress that prevailed among the cotton operatives in Lancashire at the time of the American Civil War, Mr. Gladstone gave employment to some of the men in making footpaths in Hawarden park and woods, an improvement of the property that had been long meditated. Mrs. Gladstone invited the men to bring with

them their unemployed daughters, asked her brother to give her the use of an old house—a former dower-house—situated in the court-yard of the castle, fitted it up as a house for the girls, and had them trained in domestic work; as soon as they attained some degree of efficiency she found them situations. Others then came from Lancashire to take their places at the Home.

Later on, after the cholera outbreak in London, she brought to Hawarden some of the orphans[1] she had taken charge of at Clapton and lodged them in a smaller house; they attended the village school and were taught trades. When the Lancashire trouble was past, and the hands had returned to the mills, the orphans were transferred to the larger house, where thirty children could be accommodated. It has only lately been given up. The smaller house then became a Home for aged women. When Mrs. Gladstone was at Hawarden, she paid frequent visits to the Orphanage and Home, accompanied generally by her daughters and any lady who chanced to be staying with them.

In the forties of last century the only political

[1] They consisted chiefly of boys whose father or mother had died in the London Hospital.

work in which women took any part was in canvassing, and even that was done individually without any sort of organisation. Women did not speak on public platforms, did not form political associations, and although the wives of the great politicians in or out of office talked freely of all that was going on, and undoubtedly had through their husbands and their men friends great influence on affairs in many ways, it never occurred to them to band themselves into an organisation or to demand the Vote. Yet women had managed to effect important social reforms. Elizabeth Fry as early as 1813 brought the conditions of prison life into notice, and reforms were instituted. Elizabeth Barrett Browning helped to better the conditions of the children who worked in mines and factories,[1] and Helen Taylor through her public spirit brought about drastic reforms in the industrial schools of London, to mention only a few instances that, were this a suitable place, might easily be multiplied. Mrs. Gladstone did her share of canvassing, and especially helped her husband in the Oxford election of 1847. She was said to be very skilful at the work and hard to

[1] Cf. her "Cry of the Children," first printed in *Blackwood's Magazine*, August 1843.

resist. But it was not until Gladstone's Midlothian Campaign of 1879 that there arose any thought of political organisation among women. A presentation was made to him and Mrs. Gladstone at Dalkeith [1] of an album of photographic views of Scottish scenery from the ladies of the county, and a velvet tablecover from the women workers at a carpet factory at Lasswade. In acknowledging the gifts, Mr. Gladstone spoke of those political interests which appealed more especially to women, and pointed out how women might assist in the regeneration of the world. Addressing the women present he said :

" The harder and sterner and drier lessons of political economy are little to your taste. You do not concern yourselves with abstract propositions. It is that side of politics that is associated with the heart of man that I must call your side of politics." He then pointed out how " peace " was the one thing that must make a strong appeal to women, and how they could do much to influence its preservation among the nations ; and to prevent the " mischief, indescribable and unredeemable, of causeless and unnecessary war." At the same time Gladstone made it clear that he knew that the

[1] 26th November 1879.

state of society did not permit a vow of universal peace and the renunciation in all cases of the alternative of war. He concluded his address by an appeal to women to bear their part in the crisis, and thought that he was making no inappropriate demand but was asking them as women "to perform a duty which belongs to you, which, so far from involving any departure from your character as woman, is associated with the fulfilment of that character and the performance of its duties, and the neglect of which would in some future time be to you a source of pain, but the accomplishment of which will serve to build your future years with sweet remembrances, and which will warrant you in hoping that each of you, within your own place and sphere, has raised your voice for justice, and striven to mitigate the sorrows and misfortunes of mankind."

The appeal was to bear great fruit. Towards the end of 1880, after the General Election of that year placed the Liberal party in power, small associations of women Liberals began to be formed in London and the Provinces, and by the spring of 1886 there were about fifteen of such associations in existence. But it was not until 1887 that the central organisation of the

Women's Liberal Federation was formed, with Mrs. Gladstone as president. The inaugural meeting was held, 25th February 1887, with Mrs. Gladstone in the chair. Thus Mrs. Gladstone was seventy-five years of age before she took any really active part in politics, or made any speeches from a public platform. Her voice, though very sweet, was not strong, and she could only be heard by those seated in her immediate neighbourhood; her ingrained lack of method prevented her ever properly grasping the technical routine of a public meeting. But others more efficient in such matters were always ready to help her through, and there is no question that her acceptance of the presidency made for the strength of the Federation, and caused it to count in the political world. Her record as wife, mother, and philanthropist was a fine one, and it was felt that, combining in perfection as she did the new and the old ideal of woman's mission and work, she was eminently the right person in the right place. In her inaugural address she said that she understood there were a number of women anxious to work for the Liberal cause and able to do so with advantage. Such work on the part of women should be open and clear and carried on by direct

not by backstairs influence. She herself held rather old-fashioned views regarding the part to be taken by women in the world's work, but they could all, without in any way impairing their efficiency as women, help the Liberal cause, which had always been one of progress and justice. She was present at meetings wherever she could manage it, most often arranged in conjunction with some speech of her husband, as at Nottingham in October 1887, or at Birmingham in November 1888, where, in referring to the Irish question, she pointed out how women could do great things for the cause with gentleness, patience, kindness, and charity, by tenderly and quietly educating and not quarrelling with their opponents. "We must persevere, combining our efforts, reassuring the doubtful, stimulating the weak, working and waiting with courage and with faith." In May 1889 the annual meeting of the Federation was held in London during the sittings, as it chanced, of the Parnell Commission, at which Mrs. Gladstone was a regular attendant. The forty associations of 1887 had increased to 133, with over 43,000 women members in 1890, and in that year the question of their attitude towards woman suffrage had to be considered. It led to a split

in the camp, but contrary to expectation Mrs. Gladstone continued her presidency of the old society, which now put the Parliamentary enfranchisement of women in the forefront of its objects; but while she did not feel keen about it, and had no inclination personally to advocate it, she saw that it had become a question of the hour, and the fact that the Federation supported it did not seem to her a sufficient reason for resigning, especially as the party were straining every nerve to bring Mr. Gladstone back to power, and the Whips desired to retain the influence that was wielded by her position as president. But when Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister again in 1892, there was no longer a special reason for the continuance of the office, and in October she signified her intention of resigning: "I have already on my hands," she wrote to Lady Aberdeen, "as much as I can do, and every year makes it more necessary for me to be free from any extra cares and responsibilities."

Mrs. Gladstone's active political work was undertaken solely because she thought she could thereby be useful to her husband and the causes he had so deeply at heart. It extended only over some half-dozen years, from her seventy-

fifth to her eighty-first year. She disliked publicity, though she was quite ready to accept the share of it inevitable from her husband's great position, but she had no idea of aggrandising women as women, of setting sex against sex; she believed that organisation would enable women to take their share of the larger life of the world without any risk of hurting "distinctive womanhood," and her own life set an example of the possibility for a woman to gain mental breadth without failing in "childward care" or losing "the childlike in the larger mind."

III

On 25th July 1889 Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone celebrated their golden wedding, completing fifty years of a married life in which they had abundantly realised "all the unclouded blessings of the home." The year before, on entering their fiftieth year of married life, colleagues and personal friends presented them with their portraits, that of Mr. Gladstone painted by Holl and of his wife by Herkomer, and three massive silver cups. In thanking them Mr. Gladstone said that it was difficult for him to give an adequate idea of the domestic happiness he had enjoyed during the fifty years of his married

life. Other presentations were made on the wedding anniversary itself, both in London and at Hawarden, and again Mr. Gladstone said that no words he could use would ever suffice to express the debt he owed his wife in relation to all the offices she had discharged in his behalf during the long and happy period of their conjugal union.

Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister for a short time in 1886. From 1892 to 1894 he again held the office, and in the latter year retired for good from public life. Mrs. Gladstone was much disturbed by his decision and did everything in her power to persuade him to continue in office, but he stood firm as the rocks at Biarritz, where the discussion was held. It had always been his belief that men ought not to go on with official work after they had become really old. He was eighty-five, so that no one could say he had not done his share of the work of the world.

The nature of the pains in the face from which Gladstone suffered was recognised early in 1897. His wife went with him to Cannes in the hope that a more genial climate might be beneficial, but when it became certain that the malady was incurable, they returned to

Hawarden. Though there was nothing she could do for him, she sat by his bedside till the end, only consenting with great reluctance to take a few hours' rest. When, on 19th May 1898, all was over, and her lifelong companion had gone from her, even in her deep grief she thought of others, and before the remains of her beloved husband were taken from Hawarden to their last resting-place in the Abbey, she drove out to offer consolation to two Hawarden women whose husband and fiancé had been killed in a mine accident the day before. She and her sorrow were in every one's hearts, and Lord Rosebery, speaking in the House of Lords, expressed in memorable words what all were feeling when he referred to the "solitary and pathetic figure who for sixty years shared all the sorrows and all the joys of Mr. Gladstone's life, who received his every confidence and every aspiration, who shared his triumphs with him and cheered him under his defeats, and by her tender vigilance sustained and prolonged his years."

Mr. Gladstone's body was brought to London for burial in the Abbey. Mrs. Gladstone accompanied the mournful convoy, and stayed in London at the house of her niece, Lady Frederick Cavendish. She was present at the funeral, an

impressive and touching scene, seated at the head of the grave, the group around which included, besides children and grandchildren, sons and daughters-in-law, princes, statesmen, high dignitaries and functionaries of every kind. When all was over the Prince of Wales [1] went up to the chief mourner and, bending down, kissed her hand, and said a word or two of sympathy; Prince George [2] did the same, thus reversing the usual attitude of sovereign and subject. The example so greatly set was followed by the other pall-bearers, and Mrs. Gladstone was so much revived by the wonderful tribute the whole funeral had been to her husband's worth, that she was able to say to each the most suitable thing, reminding, for example, the aged Duke of Rutland that he had been Gladstone's colleague at Newark when he had been returned for his first Parliamentary seat. Some one said that Mrs. Gladstone went into the Abbey a widow and walked out of it a bride.

The death of her eldest son in 1891 and the retirement of Gladstone in 1894 had seemed to break her spirit, and it was clear to all for the first time that she really showed signs of age. But after the great testimony of the

[1] Afterwards Edward VII. [2] Now George V.

Abbey her vitality in large measure returned, and she was almost her old self until her death, which occurred at Hawarden, 14th June 1900. A few days later she was buried near her husband in Westminster Abbey.

Although Mrs. Gladstone was never a great social force, her grace and charm of manner won her a large circle of attached friends. When the occasion called for it, she could be the *grande dame*, and could act with great dignity. Beneath her simplicity of manner lay great cleverness. She disliked bores, and showed peculiar skill in extricating herself from them without their perceiving her manœuvre. With importunity, however, she had no patience; she would then summon all her dignity, and would put the sinner in his place without ado. She scarcely practised the social arts in the technical sense of the term. She was indifferent in the choice of guests, and seldom troubled to make sure that they would amalgamate. The Thursday 10 a.m. breakfasts became deservedly famous, because they comprised most of the celebrities of the day—a prima donna, a popular actor, an editor, Mme de Novikoff, Canon Liddon, a great Whig peeress. Dinners would include a mixed company of Members of Parliament and a few non-political

friends. At Hawarden the great Whig nobles of the party, like Lord Spencer, Lord Rosebery, and Lord Aberdeen, were chiefly entertained, at whose houses also the Gladstones stayed. Life at Hawarden, even with visitors in the house, was simple; food was good but plain, the hours regular and early. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone always attended the eight o'clock service at the parish church, a walk of three-quarters of a mile, returning to breakfast, which was enlivened with brilliant talk. It was with difficulty that in later years they could be persuaded to use a pony carriage for the early attendance at church, and at last to substitute attendance at evensong at five o'clock three times a week. Gladstone's library was known as the "Temple of Peace," and when the books overflowed into the adjoining lobby, that was christened the "Chapel of Ease."

Punctuality was a rule of the house for all. Dinner was at 8 p.m., and no late-comer was waited for, unless he or she happened to be some distinguished stranger. As soon as three were assembled Mr. Gladstone would cry, "Quorum! Quorum!" and march into the dining-room.

Gladstone always notified where he himself wished to be entertained, and Mrs. Gladstone

showed great dexterity and tact in arranging such invitations. She was similarly skilful in the general management of her husband. She secured that he should enjoy all his little peculiarities, such as eating slowly, and supplying him with the glass of good port he liked to drink after dinner, and allowing him to see the friends he preferred, both men and women—an excellent way, if wives in general would only believe and practise it, to keep husbands young and fresh.

They were both fond of walking, and very often walked home after dining out. Mrs. Gladstone was indifferent to dress, and her general untidiness and absence of method in minor matters occasionally got her into trouble. But she managed dexterously to escape it. Mr. Gladstone used to say, "My wife has a marvellous faculty for getting into scrapes, but also a marvellous faculty for getting out of them." She had a regal carriage, and her movements were swift and light. Her eyes were of a deep sapphire blue, long in shape, set well apart, in expression according to her mood, merry or tender or mischievous. Abundant soft brown hair waved on her forehead.

After the first few years of married life, when children were born in quick succession and her

health was therefore somewhat delicate, she enjoyed for the rest of her existence wonderfully fine health. She took a daily cold bath until the year of her death. One winter, when she was over eighty, a mission was held at Hawarden. As the service began at 4 a.m. she consented to sleep at the Rectory. Her son, the Rector, got up at three, made some water hot, and took it to his mother's room. She opened her door fully dressed and ready, having taken her cold bath as usual.

One reason of Mrs. Gladstone's ability to resist fatigue and to get through so large an amount of work was her practice of sleeping for short periods. She could lie down on a sofa and go to sleep at will for ten or fifteen minutes, and awake perfectly refreshed. Sometimes, too, in the House of Commons, during one of her husband's long speeches, she would take a short nap, for as she always sat with her head bent and eyes looking down on Mr. Gladstone, her companions never detected that she was asleep, and indeed were lost in admiration at the rapt way in which she listened, and the manner in which she endured the fatigue of sitting there so many hours.

Amid all her activities she found time for

much letter-writing, and corresponded with numbers of interesting people. With the slightest materials she contrived to get an atmosphere into her letters that made them delightful reading.

One who knew Mrs. Gladstone well writes :

" Helpfulness, that was the note of her character ; in any difficulty, in the most impossible case, Mrs. Gladstone would plan, contrive, arrange, enlist others, and never rest until the difficulty was solved, and the persons put in the way of helping themselves—nay more, supported, befriended, encouraged, till they could stand alone. Perhaps few persons were so often consulted and appealed to as was Mrs. Gladstone. It might be young girls entering on life in the first joy of a marriage engagement, or young beauties to whom she would gently suggest thoughts that were unworldly. Very often it would be some hard-worked London priest toiling single-handed amongst his thousands, and thinking no one cared, who found in Mrs. Gladstone a listener not only sympathetic but suggestive, one who did not forget, but would forward his plans, and who had the rare gift of setting other people to work.

"Mrs. Gladstone had the genius of charity. *Good* or to be helped to be good, that was the essence of it all. Religion not forced, not obtruded, but as natural and vital as fresh air, was, not an adjunct of life, but life itself. In her own devotions, in the daily services of the Church, in many a Eucharist did Catherine Gladstone renew her soul's life, and increase the charity and the delightful gaiety of her temperament, and from the spirit of wisdom learn those intuitions which so rarely failed her. It seemed but natural that her last spoken words were, 'I must not be late for Church.'"

In these days of storm and stress and feverish excitement and unrest among women, it is well to recall the life of a woman like Mrs. Gladstone who, in a period when such mechanical aids to activity as motor-cars and telephones were non-existent, yet contrived to be a devoted wife, smoothing her husband's path in every direction, accompanying him everywhere, an equally devoted mother, as well as a charming hostess of country-house parties at Hawarden and of the more formal entertainments in London consequent on her position as the wife of a great Minister of State. In addition to such domestic and social duties she engaged in philanthropic

work, and in no dilettante spirit; she visited hospitals, founded convalescent homes, and refuges and orphanages; she played her part in the public political work then undertaken by women. She accomplished all these things without an idea that she was doing anything worthy of note or of record, and yet quietly, unostentatiously, and unconsciously leaving an ineffaceable mark on every phase of life with which she came in contact.

VII

LADY SALISBURY

LORD SALISBURY was the last of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers, and she has left it on record that she thought him the ablest of them all. Lady Salisbury was Georgiana, daughter of Lord Alderson, Baron of the Exchequer. Lord Alderson was a man of great intellect, whose career, though honourable and useful, never quite fulfilled the expectations of his friends. At Cambridge University he was Senior Wrangler, Smith's prizeman, and Senior Chancellor's medallist, which is almost a unique record. The Aldersons belonged to what was called "the Norwich set," a group of families living near that city who made it into an intellectual centre. It is curious to learn, in connection with the history of some of his descendants, that in his early days Lord Alderson was a Unitarian, and was descended from Mrs. Opie, the well-known Quaker. He himself, however, became a member of the Church of England,

Hollyer

LADY SALISBURY

After the portrait by Sir W. B. Richmond

and the family were well known as advanced Tractarians.

Every year the Alderson family (which consisted of ten children besides Georgiana) used to spend their summer holidays at Lowestoft, where were other friends with young families, conspicuously the Palgraves. Of the Palgraves the best known was Francis, afterwards the editor of the *Golden Treasury*. There is in existence a little green-covered book called *Lays of Lowestoft*, which consists of parodies of mediæval ballads and heroic couplets something like the *Ingoldsby Legends*, though it is perhaps unfair to call into comparison these high-spirited, but naturally immature, productions with that brilliant collection of satirical verse. The jokes and allusions are rather obscure to the outsider, but the whole volume gives an impression of zest and great enjoyment. Georgiana opens the volume with a lively account of a cricket match, and there are descriptions of picnics and excursions of all sorts, to which the family drove in a donkey-cart, with tea, umbrellas, and "Tennyson's poems our hearts to affect." On another occasion they are all depicted as lying on the heather singing glees and part-songs (the

Aldersons were very musical) while the sun went down. Two verses are sufficiently characteristic :

"Now sparkling hock and sparkling wit
Are vying with each other,
And one bright flash of repartee
Is followed by another.

And grave ecclesiastics too,
With lawyers shrewd and cunning,
Contend with squires and ladies fair
In the gay art of punning."

The whole book is full of the atmosphere of the irresponsible years between childhood and maturity. One feels it must all have been great fun.

Georgiana "came out," like other girls, when she grew up, and is generally believed to have enjoyed that also. Indeed, she might have taken as one of her secondary mottoes in life the old couplet :

"Pastime and good company
I love and shall until I die,"

with perhaps the rider that good company was the pastime best worth having. She had great vitality and a brilliant wit, and both made her such good company that a friend paraphrased Wilke's famous boast on her behalf and said that, given ten minutes' lead (to make up for her want of looks, for she was not considered

pretty), she could be backed against the loveliest of her contemporaries. Undeniably some people found her formidable, for she was a person of very strong emotions and decided opinions, and was liable to come out suddenly with emphatic expression of her views in a way that less decisive natures found startling.

There are in existence some serious poems written by Miss Alderson at this date at which she used to laugh in later life, and which she was perhaps a little unreasonably proud of never having published. They are described as being characterised by a "sweet sentimental melancholy," which was a quality no one would have suspected in her. But she probably had her "summer of green-sickness" like other people, and one of her daughters describes her as liking "to give lip-service to a pretty sentiment, though always ready to laugh at herself for the indulgence."

Among Georgiana Alderson's greatest friends was Mary, Lady Salisbury (later Lady Derby), and it was at her house she met Lord Robert Cecil, Lady Salisbury's stepson. In appearance at any rate Lord Robert was very different from the massive figure familiar to the older of present-day politicians. Angular, thin, and rather ungainly, for the dozen years before he

took office in 1866 he sat below the gangway in the House of Commons, the freest of free-lances, assailing his own leaders quite as often as the Liberal Government, with a bitterness and violence of language which rather scandalised his fellow-members. His elder brother, Lord Cranborne, being still alive, no one ever thought of his succeeding his father, while his constituency was one of the last of the pocket boroughs, so that he enjoyed every condition of irresponsibility and independence. Another element emphasised his detachment. The tendency of politics is to absorb the politician completely, and to shut out other interests and other questions. To Lord Robert politics was an occupation, while what old-fashioned people used to call philosophy—abstract thought on theology and science—was his abiding interest. He also was an advanced Tractarian, and this was probably the chief thing that first attracted him and Georgiana to each other.

The marriage was an extremely happy one. Both were deeply and devoutly religious; both were much interested in the philosophical questions that centred in religious controversy; both had keen, alert, and daring intelligences. Lady Robert, though a year or two older than her husband, was generally held to have the

younger mind, and, if power to enjoy is the attribute of youth, then she certainly had a younger temperament. They were married in 1857, and lived in a little house in Half Moon Street. They were not at all well off, and Lord Robert supplemented a small income with his pen, writing in the *Quarterly* and the *Saturday Review*. Lady Robert also wrote in the *Saturday*, a fact considered more unusual then than it would be now. Owing to their both writing anonymously, rumour of course embellished the fact, and Lady Robert was credited with some of the political articles (of the type known as "trenchant") which, as a matter of fact, were written by her husband, she having performed only the important rôle of critic. Lady Robert's own articles, unfortunately never collected, were chiefly on literary subjects.

Their eldest son was not born till 1861, to be followed by a long family of four more sons and two daughters. The relations of the mother with her children were thoroughly characteristic. To outsiders she seemed to exercise very little restraint on them, and to give them a degree of liberty of action that most children do not get. They were also treated by both parents far more as equals than is usual,

and allowed to take part and have their say in any discussion that was on foot, provided they put their points well and discussed fairly. But if she did not work her authority hard there could be no doubt of the strength of her influence, especially in the case of her sons. She was in their confidence, and her opinion had great weight with them to the end of her life. A very familiar sight in later years was Lady Salisbury driving in a high barouche with one or other of her sons, by that time grown men and public figures, absolutely absorbed in talk and both enjoying themselves.

The free-lance days came to an end in 1865, when Lord Robert's elder brother, Lord Cranborne, died and put him in the direct succession for a great fortune and one of the historical peerages of England. Further, in 1866 the Liberal Government fell, and, when the Conservatives came in under Lord Derby, the new Lord Cranborne was made Secretary of State for India. It was an interesting Parliament, the outstanding subject of interest being Reform. The career of the Government might indeed be described as more exciting than dignified. They came in disposed to pass no Reform Bill; they rapidly discovered that

the country was determined to have some Reform Bill. They started with timid and limited measures, and were hustled from one halting-place to another, until the Bill they finally passed, amid clamorous denunciations and acclamations alike, was as wide as any Liberal had ever dreamed of.

It was when one of these limitations was removed, which in his opinion made the franchise dangerously wide, that Lord Cranborne and two of his colleagues, Lord Carnarvon and General Peel, resigned in 1867. Every one sincerely respected them for their sacrifice to their principles, but it made and could make no difference to the Bill, there being only one Bill possible under the circumstances. On the other hand a comment of Lady Cranborne's was felt to have some ground. She sat next Lord Derby at a dinner-party, and he asked her good-humouredly whether she was lying awake at night doing addition sums to see how many voters were coming in under the Bill, like her husband? "No; do you know, my sums are all subtraction," was Lady Cranborne's reply, "and I have come to the conclusion that three from twelve leaves nothing." Twelve was the number of the

Derby Cabinet which, after a jolting and precarious career and a change of leadership from Lord Derby to Mr. Disraeli, fell to cureless ruin in 1868 after the new election.

Lord Cranborne had hardly been a year in office, but he had greatly increased in reputation. He had shown that when he was given responsibility he could rise to it, and his Parliamentary manner was admirable. He shot up automatically from the position of a lone hand, about whose prospects men shook their heads, to that of a coming man and a coming leader, and many regretted profoundly when his father's death in 1868 withdrew him from the House of Commons. One of the most interesting of minor political speculations is the consideration of what might have happened if his elder brother had lived and he had been compelled to pass his career in the comparative rough-and-tumble of the Commons. He was always of a very detached and aloof temperament, and might have absolutely refused to face the passion and blatancy of an ordinary contested election, as opposed to the foreseen "walks-over" of his elections at Stamford. But had he undergone it and been forced into more direct contact with the general mind of the people, it is impossible

not to believe that this detachment might have been modified—and with advantage. As a leader he was always a good deal of an enigma even to his closest associates, and a complete puzzle to the rank and file of his party. In the House of Lords he seldom had to face real opposition, and the consciousness of a foregone conclusion to the discussions imparted a degree of languor to debate. Lord Salisbury himself complained that they were all too much of one mind. At any rate, for one reason or another, he grew more and more to despise public opinion because it was public opinion, an attitude very attractive to certain types of mind, but which is apt to leave a politician the dismal choice whether he will acquiesce or resign when overborne by a public opinion formed by some one else.

Lady Salisbury, as she now became, was very conscious of the drawbacks of this attitude, and set to work to try and modify them by taking on herself a large share of the duties of political hostess. The short sitting of the House of Commons in those days was on Wednesday, and she used to have parties in her house in Arlington Street on Wednesdays for members and their wives. She was a great believer in keeping in

touch with members' wives as a means of keeping their husbands politically "straight." In addition, of course, she gave big garden-parties in the beautiful grounds at Hatfield, which were now her own, and these entertainments formed one of the outstanding social functions of each year. With only short intervals Lord Salisbury was in office for nearly thirty years, the intervals being, of course, 1880–85 and 1892–95, when Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister. Consequently the work of "keeping the party together" was continuous. Lady Salisbury played her part entirely by entertaining. So far as I can find out she never made a speech on a platform in her life, and did not look with any approval on the political associations for women which began to form in her later years. In the sense that "everybody who was anybody" always came to her parties, they were, of course, extremely successful. Yet she can hardly be described as a born political hostess. Political entertaining is inevitably a rather wholesale business, and demands a certain amount of facile amiability that did not suit her direct and decisive personality, and she was a person of strong preferences which she was not always success-

ful in concealing from the people that she did not prefer. In addition, she was very easily led into any conversation that interested her, and it was not an uncommon sight to see her shaking hands with head averted, absorbed in a discussion going on at her other elbow. (It is interesting to note that although her husband was twice Prime Minister she never lived at the historic No. 10 Downing Street.)

Lord Salisbury himself was a decidedly reluctant partner in these activities. He hated indiscriminate sociabilities, partly because his eyesight was bad and he had a difficulty in remembering faces. "Why should I spend my evening being trampled on by the Conservative party," he was heard to complain audibly one night while standing at the head of the stairs receiving his guests. Both were a great deal happier in their house-parties at Hatfield, where they could receive their personal friends. Here they could be in close touch with every one, and enjoy the play of minds which was the favourite entertainment of both. Lady Salisbury herself was a brilliant talker, quick, spontaneous, and epigrammatic, without any suggestion of premeditation. The element

about her talk that most struck outsiders was perhaps its remorseless pressing home of her points, coupled with complete good temper when points were pressed equally hard against her. She never took offence at a shrewd hit, and greatly preferred a foeman worthy of her steel to a limp and unintelligent ally. One characteristic was very marked—gossip played small part in her talk, and "spicy" gossip none at all. The reason for this was not prudery. The terms are on record with which she rebuked some unlucky scandalmonger, and they are of an eighteenth-century plainness. She was fond of the saying that "nice" people are people with nasty minds, and altogether had a fine disgust for the prying censoriousness and debased curiosity which besets a certain form of conventional piety.

Convention, in fact, was her bane, and independence the prevailing colour of her mind. She was deeply and sincerely religious, and her religion was her touchstone for all conduct. But her inferences from her creed she held herself free to make independently, and she acted, approved, disapproved, and recommended on completely individual lines. Laid down as they were by a reckless and almost appallingly

rational mind, they were no doubt sufficiently perplexing to many ordinary people. She saw no necessity to agree with every one she liked (nor, it may be added, to like every one with whom she agreed), and her friends were of every type and every shade of opinion. Dr. Liddon was one of the greatest, and with him she corresponded frequently, but she was also close friends with Dr. Tait, afterwards Primate, with Professor Tyndall, and with the late Duke of Devonshire, with all of whom Liddon probably disagreed as emphatically as possible. She had also many friends in the Liberal camp, notably Lady Rosebery. She had very strong affections, and her friendships went very deep.

Her last illness was long and harassing, lasting over two years. At first it was hoped that a change to the south of France, where Lord Salisbury had a villa, might cure her, and in 1898 she was operated on. But the dropsical symptoms recurred, and she was obliged to realise that medical skill could only modify her discomforts and not defer an inevitable end. She bore her illness with an unstinted courage that was characteristic, until she lapsed into an unconsciousness that lasted more or less all the last three weeks of her life. Perhaps in itself this

was a merciful thing, for she was thus spared the knowledge that one of her sons, Lord Edward Cecil, was shut up in Mafeking, and that the family being unable to get news were in some anxiety about him. She died at Hatfield on 20th November 1899, and her death was a blow to her husband, from which it may be said that he never recovered. Her long illness had withdrawn her from her friends for some time before her death, but nevertheless the silencing of her vivid and positive personality came as a shock to many, and to a few with whom she had been intimate as one of the irreplaceable losses of their lives. She was buried at Hatfield, and four years later her husband was laid beside her.

L. M.

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LADY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

VIII

LADY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

"THE speaker in his remarks on the previous toast implied that it was a good sign of a mother to have a good son. But he thought there was another relationship in life in which there was a good deal of sympathy. They would always find where they had a good sort of fellow—they might depend upon it—he had a good wife. At all events, he pitied the man with any interest in public events or any public duty to discharge who, when he goes home, finds a wife who knows nothing and cares nothing about it. That, he was glad to say, was not his case. He had a wife who was a keen politician; like most women, she was a keen partisan and had a very great appreciation of all who supported her husband, and, he was afraid, she was not without resentment against those who did not. He need hardly say that his wife shared the anxiety of these days and also the buoyancy of spirits and

the elasticity of feeling which enabled them to survive the disappointment."

Mr. Campbell, as he then was, made the speech from which these remarks are quoted in 1868. As a summary of his wife's character they remained applicable all her life, except perhaps when the "buoyancy of spirits" flagged owing to her long and painful illness. The "keen politician" and "keen partisan" she remained to the end.

Sarah, Lady Campbell-Bannerman, was born Sarah Charlotte Bruce, daughter of Sir Charles Bruce, a well-known officer in his day. Throughout her life her attitude of mind partook of an almost military staunchness and simplicity. For her no trumpet gave forth an uncertain sound. It was either a command from allies or a challenge from the enemy. She was married in 1860, and at the time it was said, I do not know with what truth, that of the two the young bride was the more extreme in her political views. One of the first people to appreciate her qualities of mind and character was her father-in-law. He was diametrically opposed to her in politics, but he showed his appreciation of her qualities in a very practical manner, by a substantial increase in the provision he made for

the young couple over and beyond the sum named in their original settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Campbell spent much of the early years of their marriage in foreign travel, for which they both had a great fondness. Continental journeys at that date were more adventurous than in the days of Messrs. Cook and Sir Henry Lunn, and the young couple had plenty of petty misfortunes and discomforts to laugh over in later days. France was their special favourite; they shared a great admiration for French art and French culture, and, it may be added, for French cooking.

In 1868 Mr. Campbell entered politics, fighting two elections in the same year for the same constituency, Stirling Burghs—the first unsuccessful, the second triumphant. Stirling Burghs remained his constituency throughout his life. The new member's career followed the fortunes of his party. It is curious to consider, in the light of his attitude on the South African War, how much of his official life was spent at the War Office, where he was very much liked. He was Financial Secretary to that Department in 1871, and again in 1880. In 1892 he returned there as Secretary of State to tackle an extremely delicate

and awkward affair, the retirement of the Duke of Cambridge from the position of Commander-in-Chief. The appointment was for five years only, but the Duke had treated it as an appointment for life, and had filled it for more than thirty years. Had he been a great soldier it would have mattered less, but in his prime he was no more than a hard-working and conscientious one, and now in his old age an immovable obstacle to a thousand necessary reforms. His experience dated from the time when promotion was entirely by purchase or by favour; he regarded any system of promotion by merit as a direct infringement of his privileges, both official and royal, with the result that the Staff College was deliberately shunned by ambitious officers, because it was known that "the Duke" would never promote any one who had been there. A more serious matter was the truncation and arrest of promotion right through the military hierarchy. "The worst thing the Duke did by the Army was to rob it of Wolseley's best years," was the comment of one who knew both men. A cartoon in *Punch* expressed this very aptly. It showed a slim, alert Lord Wolseley observing, "I have to relinquish my command in September." To whom a cough-

ing, lame, and corpulent Duke of Cambridge replied, "Dear me! I haven't." It was obvious he ought to retire, but he was Royal, a near relation to the Sovereign, a popular public figure, and quite unconscious of his own shortcomings, so it was difficult to bring about. But the quiet young Scotchman brought it about, and that in a manner which safeguarded the old gentleman's public dignity, whatever may have been his private feelings. The Duke was succeeded by Lord Wolseley, greatly to the public satisfaction. The whole incident served to consolidate the reputation Mr. Campbell-Bannerman had made during a short bout of the intractable duties of Chief Secretary for Ireland, and on the advice of Lord Rosebery, then Prime Minister, the achievement was acknowledged by the bestowal of the Grand Cross of the Bath.

Lady Campbell-Bannerman[1] was a soldier's daughter and took great interest in all military affairs. Circumstances combined to make the marriage a particularly close and affectionate relation. Sir Henry and his wife were childless; she was an only child, and he a member of a

[1] The surname Bannerman was taken when her husband inherited, under his uncle's will in 1872, a considerable fortune and the Castle Belmont property in Forfar.

small family. All this tended to make them concentrate their affection upon each other and ask very little of outsiders, and when the long illness began of which Lady Campbell-Bannerman died, her husband's daily and hourly devotion was touching to see. He relied implicitly on her judgment, having, as he said, so often found it reliable and shrewd. It was well for both that their mutual confidence was so close, for during and after the South African War a storm of abuse and unpopularity raged round Sir Henry, who was opposed both to the war itself and the manner in which it was conducted. No unpopularity, however, caused him to swerve in any degree, and it was often thought that his wife had a great deal to say in the maintenance of his uncompromising course. Certain it is that she shared his convictions to the full. In both they were founded in the deepest and most abiding sentiments.

They shared also the same taste in friends, with something like an oblivion of social standing and a great intolerance for pretension or pose or insincerity, more marked perhaps in the wife than in the husband. Lady Campbell-Bannerman was very proud of a strain of Dutch in her descent, but her every trait showed

the influence of generations of severe Scotch ancestors.

It has sometimes been stated that Lady Campbell-Bannerman took a prominent part in the conciliatory movements which ended in the co-ordination of the Liberal party in 1906. But, as a matter of fact, she was a bad conciliator. She found it very difficult to believe that people who differed from her husband in opinion did so in good faith. She found it nearly impossible to believe this of a member of his own party, in whom she regarded it as something like evidence of a wilful perversity. Her resentments were, accordingly, immovable. To set against this degree of prejudice she displayed a singular shrewdness in affairs, which she did not allow to be deflected by personal considerations.

Only in certain matters did she allow her emotions to trouble her judgments. She was very ambitious for her husband, more so than he was for himself. It is characteristic of his genial, good-humoured, rather easy-going temperament that at one time his ambition was the Speakership. In controversy he would probably have been almost content to state his opinion or make his protest and then go off to

his reading or travelling abroad or hunting up bargains in old furniture (of which he was a connoisseur). It was generally considered that it was his wife who kept him up to battle pitch. Yet it is almost a paradox that she could never reconcile herself to the extent to which the political life she did so much to encourage kept him away from her and away from home. She felt this so strongly that in the early days of her long illness there were not wanting people who believed her ill-health to be assumed as a pretext for keeping Sir Henry with her. It would probably be juster to believe that it was the beginnings of ill-health and the consequent sense of dependence which made the common-sense view of the necessities of the situation harder to achieve. Certain it was that she seldom seemed to realise how very severe a tax it might be on a man, who had been hard at work in a contentious atmosphere all day and all the evening, to sit up by a sick-bed or break his sleep to soothe an invalid. Yet by a curious contradiction if there was ever any occasion when Sir Henry was tempted to leave politics altogether, or there was some possibility that he might be defeated by a rival in the contest for leadership, no one was more stubborn than

his wife in the determination that he should suffer no such thing.

The winter of 1905 saw the fall of the Conservative party and a Liberal triumph assured. But the Liberals were by no means united in a desire for Sir Henry's leadership. It was doubted whether he would accept office when Mr. Balfour resigned, and many thought he would have been wiser to force the Conservatives to dissolve Parliament. Lady Campbell-Bannerman never wavered in pressing her husband to respond to the invitation of the King to form a government, with or without the support of those who might have preferred a Liberal Imperialist Prime Minister. After Sir Henry had kissed hands there were many who urged his retirement to the House of Lords. They were supported by those who were anxious about the unity of the party, and who found some of the right wing determined to refuse office except under this condition. It was even approved by some of Sir Henry's faithful followers. They had seen his difficulties as leader of the Opposition against an overbearing Conservative majority, and failed to foresee the completeness of his ascendancy in the new House of Commons. Definite

suggestions were made in responsible quarters to the Liberal Press that this course should be presented to their readers as a desirable step. One great Liberal newspaper was so perplexed by these recommendations that a special messenger was sent late at night to Sir Henry asking him if this really represented his own personal wishes. A reply was received scribbled on the letter of inquiry urging the paper to use every argument possible against the proposed policy. The hour was late, the Prime Minister had been disturbed in his sleep, and there was only just time to get the appropriate articles written before the paper went to Press.

The story runs that Sir Henry had been conducting negotiations on this subject all the afternoon and evening. As has been said, he was of an easy-going disposition, with no particular taste for domination or prominence for its own sake. He was, moreover, tired, no longer young, and anxious about his wife's health—all of them inducements to indifference. It was agreed that he should go home to dine and talk it over with his wife, who had just arrived from Scotland. Had the negotiators been wise they would have clinched their bargain then. The Sir Henry

who returned to them after dinner was a very different person. It is said that he came into the room crying, "No surrender!" and nothing would induce him to contemplate the course they pressed. When once he did make up his mind they knew it was no good arguing. They were conscious that behind his decision was the determination of a more implacable and more immovable personality than his own, and they were obliged to give way. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman became leader of the House of Commons, and led his party in the New Parliament with immense success.

It was a great triumph, but, like most human triumphs, spiced with bitterness. It was not that a few people who should have known better thought it clever and smart to gibe at the quiet, elderly Scotch couple. Lady Campbell-Bannerman was a dying woman, and those near her knew it. For twenty years she had struggled with a disease of which the end was certain from the beginning, and the end was now near. She dragged herself from her sick-bed to be present at the first reception given by Sir Henry at Downing Street, and stood by his side. She was unfashionably dressed, and, as a consequence of her illness, terribly stout,

and for many the outstanding memory of the evening was Sir Henry's manifest anxiety and preoccupation about her. All through the year 1906 she got steadily worse, her sufferings increased by the unusual heat. It was hoped that the change to Marienbad might do her good. She liked the place, and had visited it regularly for twenty-five consecutive years. She knew herself unfit to travel, but insisted on going, because "Henry would get no holiday if I don't go. It is not sufficient change to go anywhere in Scotland or England" (a remark many harassed politicians can echo). She stood the journey well, and it was hoped the change might do her good. But the improvement was only a flicker. She died on 30th August. The preliminary funeral ceremony took place at Marienbad, and was attended by many notable people, including a representative of King Edward VII. The King was at Marienbad at the time, and made all the arrangements for the service his personal concern. There had always been a warm friendship between him and Sir Henry, a circumstance perhaps equally perplexing to the "unco" patriotic among the satellites of the one and the "unco guid" among the followers of the

other. But Lady Campbell-Bannerman's body, as befitted one who was Scotch in every fibre of her being, was taken to her home in Scotland and buried in Meigle kirkyard.

Courage, staunchness, humour — these are the three things that stand out in the recollections of one who knew her well (there were not many who did). During her last years, "even to her accepted friends," is the testimony, "she was singularly silent and reserved, generally leaving all the talking to her husband, while she herself sat listening, her steady blue-grey eyes quietly observing the speaker, and gaining for herself the reputation of being a dull, heavy woman. I often wished that the people who so apostrophised her could have seen her a few moments afterwards, those same quiet eyes sparkling with humour, and those singularly silent lips making remarks showing a mental activity which very ill suggested a dull, heavy woman." The same observer mentions her reminiscences of long journeys taken in early days — "delightful to listen to, as recalled by her in her even, low, sweet voice," on account of her "sense of humour and her splendid memory." She adds: "She had a wonderful knowledge of human nature, the more striking considering

how little she really mixed and rubbed shoulders with her fellow-creatures."

Nowadays, when the rights of small nations are the proclaimed preoccupation of both the Old World and the New, it is interesting to record Lady Campbell-Bannerman's firm conviction of their value in the international atmosphere, creating, "through their determined endeavour to remain independent, a healthy, stimulating effect on the world and life in general"—a conviction cherished by her at a date when it was anything but fashionable. Another observer, a man, confesses to having been at first "put off" by her appearance—to which allusion has already been made—and being caused to forget it by an "impression of a very sensible and even powerful intelligence." Many, it has to be confessed, never saw through the unattractive appearance. Mr. T. P. O'Connor noticed unfavourably the "nervous, fluttering eyelids" and "nervous, fluttering manner."

Lady Campbell-Bannerman was as marked in her preferences and dislikes of places as of people. She enjoyed being abroad, as has been said. She was devoted to Scotland, and especially to Belmont, the Scottish castle Sir Henry

had inherited. She entered with zest into every detail of the functions of a châtelaine, superintending the garden and orchard with great thoroughness. She spent great care and pains over the decoration, which was in the French manner, the doors being copied from the palace at Versailles. Her London table was always provided with flowers from Belmont, and even her London laundry done there. For London itself she had no affection, and for Downing Street an active dislike. After her death it was found that before going to Marienbad she had cleared Downing Street of all her personal belongings and sent them to Scotland.

It has been said, "Happy the woman that has no history." It was never more than a half-truth, and in the face of a career like Lady Campbell-Bannerman's it has an ironic sound. But for her long illness it can hardly be doubted that she would have used her very remarkable gifts in a way that would have left her personal impress on her generation. Hampered and exhausted by suffering, she was yet able to affect passing events by reason of the immense influence she exercised on her husband, who took no action without consulting her. It may

perhaps be mentioned here that the rumours of his remarriage after her death, maliciously circulated at the time, never had the least foundation. On the contrary, he never recovered his loss, and only survived her by little more than a year.

L. M.

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[*No reference is made in this Index to the wives of the Prime Ministers in the chapters specially devoted to them.*]

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